Thos. Jolley Esq.r F.S.A.

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A

GENERAL HISTORY

OF THE

STAGE,

From its ORIGIN.

In which the

Several THEATRES of EUROPE,

Thoſe Particularly of

ITALY, SPAIN, FRANCE, ENGLAND, HOLLAND, FLANDERS, and GERMANY, with Regard to their Excellencies and Defects, are Critically Compared with each other;

THE

VARIOUS MANAGEMENT of them Deſcribed;

AND THE

CHARACTERS, MANNERS, and PERSONS of the PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS conſidered.

Together with

TWO ESSAYS;

On the ART of SPEAKING in PUBLIC,

AND A

COMPARISON between the ANTIENT and MODERN DRAMA.

Tranſlated from the Eminent LEWIS RICCOBONI.

The SECOND EDITION.

To which is Prefixed,

An INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE concerning the Preſent State of the ENGLISH STAGE and PLAYERS.

LONDON:

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TO

David Garrick, Esq;

SIR,

AN Author, who, with the sole Intent of farther improving the present State of the British *Theatre, by pointing out the Excellencies and the Defects of those of other Nations, translated* RICCOBONI; *in the same Spirit, and from the same Motive, addresses this Second Edition of that Translation to you, who have most Power to employ it to the designed Purpose.*

I should add a great deal to this Address of mere Civility, if I had not intended that, in an Introduction written before this Work. To that, Sir, I refer you for the Sense I entertain of the great Services such a Performance may be of in so laudable a Design:

All that I need ſay here is, that as the Tranſlator has no mercenary Views in this Dedication, it will come with the better Grace from his Hand; that he is ſure your Diſcernment will ſee the Propriety of all that can be urged from ſuch Examples; and that he doubts not but that Applauſe and that Encouragement you have deſerved ſo fully, and received ſo liberally from the Publick, will engage you in the Deſign; and give you a new Spirit, in the Attempt of adding every thing to their reaſonable Entertainment.

Accept the Thanks of one who has as often been charmed with your Performances as he has ſeen them; and believe him to be not the leſs ſincere in that Declaration, becauſe he ſubſcribes to this Addreſs no other Name than that of

The AUTHOR.

AN

AN

INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

To the SECOND EDITION,

BY THE

TRANSLATOR.

IN conſidering the Progreſs of Theatrical Entertainments in the ſeveral Parts of the World, as delivered by this careful and judicious Writer, it is natural to turn our Eyes particularly upon the preſent State of them in our own Kingdom; and to apply to that, what he obſerves concerning the ſeveral States, the particular Perfections or Defects of the others.

This is the Uſe of Reading: this the Intent of Study. One who knew more of the true Uſe of Hiſtory than any who wrote it, has ſaid that its principal Value is the ſetting before us, in the Lives of other Men, Inſtances of what will be worthy, what infamous; what advantageous, and what deſtructive, in our own. It is not leſs the Caſe, in this Story of the Theatres, than in thoſe more important Writings which he names: And however trivial the Conſideration of Men's Amuſements and Entertainments may

ſeem, in Compariſon to their authorized Butcheries of one another; yet the Obſervation holds. He will read of the *Italian*, *French*, and *Spaniſh* Theatres to little Purpoſe, who employs not the ſeveral Remarks made upon their Excellencies and Defects to the Improvement; or, if that be not in his Way, at leaſt to the better underſtanding of our own.

It has been leſs the Cuſtom of the *Engliſh* to invent, than to improve. We acknowledge it in general when we ſpeak of Things of more Conſequence: and although a *Locke*, a *Newton*, or a *Clarke*, afford eminent Exceptions, yet in general it is true: and it appears not leſs the Circumſtance in theſe of leſſer Moment. The Author of theſe Accounts tells us the *Engliſh* did not begin Theatrical Repreſentations ſo ſoon as many other of the civilized Nations; but he tells us alſo, that they have found the Way to excell them all. He gives the Palm to the Players of our Nation, againſt the *Italian* and the *French*, whatever Merit he may have allowed to thoſe. This was his Opinion, when the *Engliſh* Theatre, however diſtinguiſhed by a few good Actors, was far from the Eminence at which it is arrived now; and there is no doubt but that, under a Manager ſo judicious and ſo indefatigable as he who is moſt conſpicuous at preſent, it will continue to riſe in Excellence.

Poſſibly,

Poſſibly, ſome who doat upon the paſt, and ſuppoſe the Players of this Time to want Merit, becauſe themſelves want the Spirit that ſhould taſte it, may ſay there have been Players more eminent than thoſe who grace the preſent Theatre; but 'tis from the Reaſon only that has been juſt given. They will thunder in our Ears the *Booths* and *Bettertons*, of whom, not remembring them, they will expect to take their Account: but in that we have a Right to be excuſed. The very Deſcriptions of them by Mr. *Cibber*, who was one among them, and who is free enough in his Applauſes of them, confeſs they had their Faults: I would not ſay that Author is always free in making this Confeſſion; but 'tis eaſy to ſee them in the general Character he draws. It would be well to reſt the Compariſon on what we ſee of the preſent, and what he ſays of the paſt Actors, not regarding how he ſays it: we ſhall then find theſe the Superiors.

Give a Man of Mr. *Cibber*'s Talents a Player of Mr. *Garrick*'s Merit to praiſe, and ſee how he will lead you through all the Epithets of Dignity and Power, Variety, and Elegance, of Harmony and Feeling; and when he comes to point out the peculiar Characteriſtic of this Actor, that Fire, that native Spirit that glows in all his Parts, that double Portion of the Promethean Heat, that animates the little Lump of Clay;

you will know how much a good Cauſe improves under the Tongue of a judicious Council; how much of that ſuperlative Excellence theſe are ſaid to have poſſeſſed, you owe to his Eloquence who tells you of it. Mr. *Cibber* is old, and he is partial; he remembers the Things that pleaſed him when he was young, with an old Man's Fondneſs; and he has the old Man's Imperfection, Want of Reliſh for whatſoever is new. But ſtill making theſe Allowances for his Manner, and taking theſe Peoples Characters, as you can ſee in his Writings without adopting every florid Epithet of his Deſcriptions, you will own the preſent Players better.

This is a Point of ſome Importance, becauſe the contrary is continually ſaid; and thoſe who ſee Things ſuperficially are carried away by it. 'Tis to the Credit of our Nation that we ſhould improve in all polite Entertainments; and certainly this has a Place among them. It is an undoubted Truth, that we do improve in them; and let that Truth be acknowledged. The Encouragement that is given to theſe Entertainments is vaſtly greater than it ever was; and the Taſte of the preſent Time, with reſpect to them, is good: This ought to be a Proof. Mr. *Cibber*, to whom it is moſt proper to refer, becauſe he knows moſt of the former Theatre, will tell us that an Audi-

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ence to the Amount of Thirty-five Pounds was eſteemed a good one, when all thoſe famed Actors and Actreſſes play'd together. At preſent Mr. *Garrick* ſeldom plays to leſs than a Hundred and Sixty; and the Merit of Mrs. *Gregory* (Novelty apart) has never brought into the larger Houſe ſo little. We have ſeen the Prices of the Places raiſed a Fourth, upon the Appearance of ſome new Entertainment of particular Expence; and we have ſeen thoſe advanced Prices continued (without any one's murmuring) to all Plays; and now made univerſal. We have ſeen the full Price of Admiſſion demanded for half a Play, when there was a new Entertainment of this Kind, without Diſturbance; and we ſee at this Time the ſame ſtrict Rule obſerved in favour of the Harlequin *Fortunatus*, after the firſt Run has been long over; and when tacked to Plays in which Mr. *Garrick* has not acted.

The Readineſs with which all People ſubmit to this, is a Proof how perfect an Encouragement they are willing to give to the preſent Theatre. There is no Queſtion but it will be eaſy to aboliſh that Cuſtom of receiving half the Price for two thirds of the Evening entirely: and he muſt deſerve ill of the Publick, who, under ſuch Encouragement, would not endeavour every thing in his Power to add to the Entertainment. It does not ſeem that Mr. *Garrick* will ever

be

be deficient in this Particular; and perhaps we have nothing to wish so much as that the Management may continue in his Hands, to see the Stage rising continually in Credit.

It would be very unfair to deliver this Praise partially; and by saying so much of the principal Manager of one of the Theatres, to cast a tacit Reflection upon the other. Mr. *Rich* has never been deficient in Care and Application: No Manager, not only not the present of the other House, but none ever shew'd more Readiness to engage whatever might be pleasing to his Audiences: But Mr. *Garrick* is a younger Man; he has more of the bustling Spirit of the World, and he is himself an Actor. We are accustomed to see the principal Parts of Plays done as well at his House as at the other; but at the other we are accustomed to see all done well. There is a Pleasure in this which an Audience never fails to relish highly: And the Presence of a Manager who treads the Stage himself is a great Advantage.

This is a very due Praise to Mr. *Garrick*, and he feels what is more valuable than Praise from it. But it may be carried farther; nay, it ought: it is necessary; and even at his House some very fine Scenes are spoil'd for want of it. It were foolish to join the Mob in hollowing at the thin Seats in a *Venetian* Senate; for that is right: a Council of

Six

Six determines all Things of Importance there; but then the Six might look like Counſellors. One is offended at the dirty Faces and the dirty Shoes of theſe *moſt potent Grave and Reverends*; and in the ſame Manner one cannot help being diſguſted with the Conſpirators who join with *Pierre*. We conceive of them as great Men engaged in a great Enterprize; the principal Perſons in one of the moſt powerful States in the World, joined to its Deſtruction: How is this Idea ſatisfied, when we ſee the Band of Big-coated Candle-ſnuffers? Embroidery and Dirt; unfit Embroidery, and Dirt that ſits too naturally, ſtriving at an impoſſible Union: and when we hear the better Sort of them ſpeak, thoſe who are judged fit to be intruſted with a Line and half, how are we diſguſted! Theſe, Men to form Conſpiracies, to overturn States, and ſet the World in Uproar! Senſe and Reaſon contradict it! The Force of the Scene is wholly deſtroy'd by the unnatural Aſpect. We cannot expect *Pierre* ſhall be ſucceſsful; we ſee theſe People muſt betray him. When he is in the midſt of them he ſeems a Hero encircled by a Race of Pickpockets; and we bluſh to ſee him embrace Men who are fitter to wipe his Shoes.

There are many Inſtances of the like Kind in other Tragedies; and they are the great Diſgrace of the preſent Theatre. The Manager

nager will ſay 'tis difficult for him to remove them; for Men who have a Mein and Aſpect have generally Parts joined with it, and will not be placed as Cyphers: and thoſe who are able to perform a Character of Conſequence will not accept theſe Parts of a Line or two. It may be difficult to get the better of this; but it cannot be impoſſible. It will offend theſe Gentlemen of better Figure, and higher Rank, to be uſed occaſionally in low and trifling Characters; but they ſhould remember it is only occaſionally: and he ſhould remember that they are his Servants. The Army ſubmits in ſome degree to theſe Regulations; and the beſt Players, probably, would not be for demanding a Rank above the ſuperior Officers: if ſo, the Secondaries cannot be placed higher than Subalterns. The Remedy will follow. The Superior among the Forces has Power to make theſe ſerve in any Capacity. The Serjeant raiſed from a private Man muſt deſcend into a private Man again, if the Neceſſity of the Service require it; and why ſhould not the ſame be practiſed in theſe Forces of the Stage? This is wanting: This is the great, nay, one might almoſt ſay, it is the only Thing wanting to raiſe the preſent Theatre to the higheſt Pitch of Excellence: And why ſhould it not be done? The Publick give ſufficient Encouragement; the Manager has Abilities and Spirit; and if this be

the only Reform neceſſary, why ſhould he delay to make it? As to the Gentlemen themſelves, to eaſe their tender Minds, and reconcile the Practice to their Notions of Honour, they ſhould conſider (continuing the Alluſion with which the Profeſſion has been honoured) That when Works of Importance are preſſing, Generals themſelves will take up the Pickaxe and the Spade; but in the ordinary Courſe of Things, and when that preſſing Neceſſity is over, they leave thoſe Tools in the Hands of thoſe who are deſtined to the Uſe of them, and return to their own great and important Characters.

The true Taſte of the preſent Audiences will extremely favour any Attempt of a Manager upon this Foundation: The Actors whom he would offend by it are not of the capital ones on whom he depends; and therefore they depend on him: They depend alſo upon the Favour of the Publick. They may be aſſured that the Publick would receive them with moſt Favour when they took moſt Pains to pleaſe them; and would never ſupport them againſt a Manager who had endeavoured to make them the moſt uſeful, whatever, in their own romantick Opinions, their Honour might have ſuffered by ſuch forced Condeſcenſion.

It is from this Taſte of the Audiences that we are to expect the great Improvements in the Theatre: the Manager, when that

Taſte

Taſte happens to be bad, muſt conform to it; much more is it neceſſary, as well as commendable, when it is good as now. Even the Galleries at this Time contain no *Dutch* Spectators, who would roar with Satisfaction to ſee a Bear act the Part of an Executioner, or a Criminal hang'd upon the Stage: Even our Harlequin Entertainments do not deſcend to any thing quite ſo contemptible as this. But it were well if they could be aboliſhed, becauſe they come much nearer to it than any thing elſe of our Repreſentations. Mr. *Garrick* ſeemed once to be of Opinion that this was practicable; nay, his City Friends talk of a Kind of Promiſe, that if ever he were raiſed to the Patent, no ſuch Buffoonery ſhould diſgrace his Theatre: Little Minds alone will ſuppoſe it poſſible he ſhould be influenced by Views of Intereſt only to continue theſe Follies. It would be as eaſy for him to receive the full Price for half a Play during the Seaſon, with one of his own Farces after it, as with a Pantomime; and it would be as reaſonable to demand it: this would at once encourage him to employ his Talents as a Writer, as well as Actor, to our Entertainment, and tend more than any thing to diſplace thoſe Scenes which never fail to diſguſt the better Part of an Audience, and are a Scandal to a Theatre which has in its Service ſuch a Set of Players.

This laſt Particular is the more ſtriking

at *Drury-Lane* Houſe, becauſe the Perſon who acts the Harlequin has very great Talents for more rational Performances. He has ſhewn alſo, that he is capable of Improvement: and, far from thinking that even the Applauſe of the Injudicious could make wrong right, he has, particularly of late, left off many exceptionable Things in his Manner, and come nearer to Nature. The Conſequence is what it ought: he receives that Applauſe from the Pit which uſed to come from the Top of the Houſe; and he receives it, as he deſerves, in a double Portion.

What might not be expected from a Player who ſtudies to mend even in thoſe Things, in which he receives Applauſe! and what Pity he ſhould be interrupted in thoſe Improvements by the Practice of what might be better done by an Alehouſe Tumbler. Thoſe who ſaw Mr. *Woodward* in Sir *Fopling Flutter*, and, notwithſtanding ſome little Faultineſs, diſtinguiſhed ſuch great Merit in the Performance, muſt have been diſguſted beyond ſufferance to ſee him hop about in his chequered Coat, a Quarter of an Hour after, in *Fortunatus*; and play the Part of a Monkey after he had rally'd with ſo much true Spirit one of the moſt delicate Foibles of his own Species.

The ſpeaking Harlequin of the *Italian*, and the *Gracioſo* of the *Spaniſh* Theatre, mean as they may be, are yet much more tolerable

tolerable than this Abuſe of the Character: Perſons of Humour always play them, and there is Novelty in the Place of greater Merit. This would not do with the juſt and diſcerning Taſte of an *Engliſh* Audience; but ſurely the dumb Folly ought to be leſs countenanced than the Impertinence.

If this Taſte of the *Italian* be as much below our Approbation, as the Abſurdity or Barbariſm of a *Dutch* Comedy, there is ſomething yet to be learned from the Performers of that Nation. Inferior as they are to ours in the Expreſſions of the greater Paſſions, they excel us as much in the lighter and more trivial Circumſtances: and if they want the Force of that ſtudied Deportment, by which our tragick Actors ſometimes perform Wonders, they have a Freedom and bold Eaſe in the comic, which we ſhould do well to imitate, and a Variety, of which we ſeem at preſent to have no Conception. This is the Uſe to be made of Obſervations on the Cuſtoms and Manners of other Theatres: this is the Purpoſe with which we ought to ſee the foreign Performers; and this the real Advantage we may draw from reading Accounts of the *Italian* and *French* Theatres, when written with the Spirit and the Candour of this Author, when they are as free to point out their Defects as Beauties.

We have heard of one of the eminent Performers in ſome of the firſt ſerious Operas that

that were introduced in *England*, who was acknowledged to exceed all the others upon the *Engliſh* Theatres at that Time, in the Juſtice, Elegance, and Grandeur of his Deportment. He gave Senſe to the moſt paltry Words, and even Majeſty to Nonſenſe. In this the *Italian* Stage might have then been a Pattern to the *Britiſh*; and we have a preſent Example of the ſame Thing, not leſs eminent or leſs acknowledged, though in another Way.

The Burletta's acted at this Time, ſhew us one Performer, a Girl, who excells all the Actreſſes or Actors we have ſeen in comic Deportment. Often its Extravagance carries it to Farce, but ſtill even there it is pleaſing. We call it in ſome Particulars unjuſt, that is, unnatural; and a ſober Judge of theſe Things where he has ſeen the Girl making Grimaces at the Pit, and putting ſome baſhful *Briton* out of Countenance, has aſked whether there were any thing in the Words of the Song to ſupport this Extravagance of Geſture? The ſame Anſwer may be given to both theſe tacit Cenſures. It is *Italian* though not *Engliſh* Nature: and the Cuſtom of the Country ſupports this Violence of Tone and Manner, even when the Words are trivial.

To reliſh theſe Performers properly, we ſhould conceive that they are rallying *Italian*, and not *Engliſh* Follies and Extravagancies;

gancies; and that nothing can be too extravagant for ſuch a Deſign. As to the Action of this young Perſon, it muſt therefore be acknowledged juſt as well as free; altho' at firſt Sight it may ſtrike us as improper, And knowing where, according to our Taſte it is exceſſive, thoſe who imitate it, may there drop the Original.

We have admired the *Italian* Dancers for that perfect Command of their Perſons, by which they throw themſelves into Attitudes of every graceful Kind; this Girl has brought that Command of Limbs and Features into Comedy in their Way: And certainly if ſome of our tolerable Actreſſes would exchange their *Engliſh* Stiffneſs for ſome of this foreign Eaſe, they would do themſelves new Honour. In Farces, all that we have ſeen in this Perſon might be introduced in our own Language, and by our own Performers; for, Thanks to thoſe who write them, we have Characters as extravagant repreſented there as any theſe can mimick; and the utmoſt of this Exceſs would become them.

The other Thing it would be well that our Actors would imitate from the *Italians*, is their Variety: This would do them much more Honour than their conſtant Sameneſs, and certainly would give their Audiences greatly more Pleaſure. With us the ſame Scene is always play'd in the ſame Manner,

not

not only by the ſame Actor, but by every Actor who performs it: We know, therefore, before it comes, all that we are to admire. Perhaps there never was a greater or a juſter Piece of Action upon the Theatre of any Country, than that conſummate Player Mr. *Barry* threw into his Character of the Earl of *Eſſex*, when his Wife fell into a Swoon, and he was going to Execution; but 'twas every Night the ſame. In this Manner alſo that beautiful, though perhaps not proper, Attitude of *Romeo* at the Tomb, is always the ſame, not only in Mr. *Barry* and in Mr. *Garrick*, every Time each plays, but 'tis the ſame in both: On the contrary, let an *Italian* pleaſe ever ſo greatly once in his Scene, he never courts a ſecond Applauſe by the ſame Attitude. It ſeems that thoſe of our Performers are practiſed at the Glaſs, thoſe of the *Italians* riſe from Nature: theſe People having that true Enthuſiaſm to conceive themſelves really the Perſons they repreſent. In Comedy this Fault is more frequent and more conſpicuous in our People than in Tragedy; with the *Italians* it is more avoided.

When the Burletta's were performed ſome Years ſince at the *Hay Market*, People were vaſtly pleaſed with a Quarrel between an old Scholar and a Fop, and which was continued with a Multiplicity of bold and expreſſive Geſtures at leaſt ten Minutes: The Audience did a Thing very uncommon; they

called for the whole Scene again. They were obeyed: The Father and the Fop entered, renew'd their Quarrel, and continued it as long as they had done before, and enforced it with as many as violent and as expreſſive Attitudes and Geſtures; but theſe all different. They truſted to Nature to give them a proper Deportment for the Scene, and ſhe did not fail them: They had Recourſe to the ſame Inſtructreſs again, and they ſucceeded as well, though in a perfect Variety; for the Fund is inexhauſtible.

It would be well that our Performers in both Ways, inſtead of ſervilely practiſing ten Hours before a Glaſs, what is to be palmed upon their Audience as the ſudden Effect of a Paſſion; or inſtead of coldly copying one another, would follow Nature as theſe People do; and give us ſomething new every Time we ſaw them; although we were preſent at the ſame Play for eight Repetitions.

The Want of this ſeems one of the great Cauſes why new Plays are ſo much diſcountenanced, or at beſt ſo coldly received; not that I would venture to ſay they have all deſerved better Treatment. However, we may in this Point ſet their Merit quite out of the Queſtion; and yet ſee why it is very natural they ſhould be diſcountenanced. We are weary of ſeeing the ſame Thing in the ſame Manner, though we could very well

receive

receive it with the Advantage of but a little Variety. If we are content to recollect the Sentiments, and from our imperfect Remembrance of the Words in which they are cloathed acknowledge a Sort of Novelty, that greateſt of all Charms, in the Repetition of them; we are diſguſted at having the ſame Geſtures, Looks, and Attitudes repeated to us nine Times over. To remember theſe, and expect them over and over again, is inſupportable; and it argues a ſtrange Dearth of Invention in thoſe who practiſe them; at leaſt it would argue this, if Cuſtom did not too much authoriſe it: and it will when that Cuſtom ſhall be condemned by all Perſons as unnatural and vicious.

In the Tragedy of *Boadicea*, which but for this cloying Repetition would certainly have pleaſed more than nine Nights, we had an Inſtance of the Fault in the greateſt Player in the World: It is no particular Cenſure to charge him with it, becauſe 'tis cuſtomary; and nothing elſe was expected from him; but he will own the Impropriety when he ſubmits the Queſtion not to Cuſtom, but to his own diſcerning and impartial Reaſon.

Mr. *Garrick*, in the Character of *Dumnorix*, in this Play, drew his Sword on the firſt Night in the midſt of a Prayer; and full of the Uprightneſs of his Cauſe, brandiſhed it in the Face of Heaven: It was

diſputed whether this were proper; but there could be no Diſpute whether a Repetition of it could be proper: that was impoſſible. The Suddenneſs of a virtuous Emotion might excuſe him once in doing it; but nothing could juſtify the cold Repetition; nor could any thing be more unpleaſing to an Audience than to know beforehand what was to happen as the Start of a Paſſion, and to be able to ſay at what Word the Hero was to draw forth his Weapon. This, taking away the Appearance of Nature and Reality, debaſes in the greateſt Degree a Player who is full of her true Feelings, and places Mr. *Garrick* upon almoſt a Level with the Automatons, who attend upon him in that Scene, to whom he is to give a Look as their Cue for drawing their Swords, as the Word in the Prayer is his.

Theſe Things are not named as private Cenſures: for not being particular to the Perſon, they can bring no Diſgrace upon him. It was proper to bring an Inſtance of the Fault that had been named; for one Example ſpeaks plainer than a thouſand Explanations; and nothing could do ſo much Juſtice to the general Nature of the Cenſure, as producing that Inſtance from him who would, if any could be ſo, have been above the Reach of the Fault. It is incumbent on ſuch Players as this to remedy the common Follies of the Stage; and their

Example

Example will give Authority and Weight to the Practice. The World will eaſily diſcern that he who dedicates his Labours to this Gentleman can have no Pleaſure in diſtinguiſhing his Foibles; and he will call that Perſon moſt his Friend who points them out: It might be decent to do this privately, if they were his particularly; but when they are the Foibles of the Time, and all fall into them, there needs not the Reſerve.

The Women of the preſent Stage are much leſs liable to this Cenſure than the Men; they may therefore with Juſtice, and greatly to their Honour, claim a Reſerve for themſelves in the Sentence: Not that they are wholly free from the Fault, but that they are not ſo guilty of it; and this is the more to their Honour, becauſe if they had fallen into it, and pleaded the Example of the Men, it would have been an Authority. Whoever obſerves Mrs. *Cibber*, in her repeated playing of *Indiana*, will find continually ſomething new in her Manner, her Geſture, and Deportment. All her Attitudes in her Diſtreſs ſpeak the ſame Emotions of Deſpair; but the whole Frame is as capable of Variety in Expreſſion, as the Voice. This is not the only Proof we have of that Actreſs's really poſſeſſing that Enthuſiaſm of the Theatre; on which all great Acting depends, and of her perfectly loſing herſelf in the Character: of her being not Mrs. *Cibber*,

Cibber, but very *Indiana*; very Lady *Macbeth*; and very very *Conſtance*.

Her Variety is no where ſeen ſo much as in this laſt named Character: It has been indeed ſo great, that many have queſtioned whether ſhe now play'd it ſo well as ſome Years ſince; but they anſwer themſelves by the very Conduct of the Queſtion. While one inſiſts ſhe is not equal to her former ſelf, and another that ſhe is greater than ever: Enquire more ſtrictly, and you find they ſaw her on different Nights: The Queſtion is not, whether Mrs. *Cibber* acted *Conſtance* better ſome Years ago or now, but whether ſhe acted it better on *Tueſday* or on *Thurſday*, and the whole Reſult is, that Mrs. *Cibber* has great Variety. The Spirit and Geſture of one Night pleaſe ſome; thoſe of another Night others; according to their different Judgments. Mrs. *Cibber* is equal and alike worthy their Applauſe in all.

It were Injuſtice to paſs by Mrs. *Pritchard*, without her Share of this Praiſe; and thoſe muſt have ſeen *Merope* but once, who want a lively Inſtance of it. But this Variety is more ſurpriſing in that new Actreſs named before, who, tho' always the ſame haughty, jealous, fond *Hermione*, never was twice indebted to the ſame Set of Attitudes and Geſtures to expreſs that Excellence.

REFLECTIONS

REFLECTIONS

UPON

DECLAMATION, or, *The Art of Speaking in Public*, &c.

A PERSON who does not profeſs an Art, is excuſable if he is ignorant of its Principles; but if he profeſſes it, he is anſwerable to the Public if he is not completely Maſter of it both in Theory and Practice. The different Callings of Mankind in Civil Society are the Effects of the wiſe Diſpoſitions of an all-ruling Providence, and it is blameable in us to neglect the moſt minute Conſideration that may contribute either to our Inſtruction in the Theory, or Perfection in the Practice.

Experience however teaches us, that many look upon their own *Profeſſion* as the *Tyrant* of their *Genius*, and exclaim againſt their Fate for ſubjecting them to Labours which are their Averſion, and leading them into

Purſuits in Life, in which, for want of the neceſſary Talents, they have no Proſpect of ſucceeding. Hence it proceeds, that many neglect their own Profeſſion, and are ignorant in the Rules of an Art, which has employed their whole Life to practiſe.

It would be eaſy to demonſtrate the Folly of this; and the Hiſtory of the great Men, who have excelled in the Sciences and fine Arts, are fertile in Examples of a contrary Conduct. Even Daily Experience may convince us, that a Man, whom Nature has indulged neither in the neceſſary Talents nor in the Inclination for an Art which he profeſſes, can, by Application, ſupply theſe Defects ſo perfectly, as to arrive at the ſame Excellence with thoſe who ſhare largely in every Gift of Nature and Judgment, that is requiſite to attain *Perfection.*

Among the Arts, there is one which is either quite given up, or neglected, the Moment that a Perſon, after a faint Eſſay in it, finds that he is deſtitute of the Qualifications that can make him ſhine. This proceeds from a common Prepoſſeſſion that *Excellence* is not to be acquired, that *Defects* are not to be ſupplied, nor the *Difficulties* that lye in the way ſurmounted, without the Aſſiſtance of *Natural Genius.* The Art I mean is that of *Declamation*, an Art in which *Demoſthenes* is a ſtanding Inſtance to reproach

proach the *Indolent*, and a glorious Example to promote the *Induſtrious*.

The Art I treat of unites the Expreſſion of Action to the Propriety of Pronunciation, in order to give the Sentiment its full Impreſſion upon the Mind or Heart.

A tuneable Voice, a great and a graceful Deportment, are not ſufficient to make a Speaker ſucceed in every Province of Oratory. We every Day ſee Speakers who with all theſe Advantages are grown grey in a falſe manner of Action, and this becauſe they did not reflect that Nature does not beſtow the Poliſh upon the Diamond ſhe forms, and that it is Labour and Art which gives it Water and Luſture.

Could we trace the Progreſs of the greateſt Orators of our Times, I am perſuaded we ſhould find that their firſt Eſſays were but faint and unpromiſing, nay, that their Manners were ungraceful and awkward, and that it required a long Courſe of Study and Application to correct the original Abſurdities of their Action. The great Maſters of Antiquity are thought by many to be but weak Authorities upon this Head; the *learned Few* indeed eſteem them, but by moſt Speakers they are diſregarded; as if every Deviation from their *Principles* was not at the ſame time a Deviation from *Truth* and *Nature*. Men of Genius, when they read

their Works, perceive that their Precepts are no other than a Repetition of what their own Underſtanding had before ſuggeſted; ſometimes the ſame *Ideas* recur, which after a ſerious Examination we find were expreſſed by the Ancients; and this leads ſome Moderns into a Miſtake that *Antiquity* is only an uſeleſs Piece of *Reading*; but I maintain that this is the very Quality which recommends it.

It is true, that when we reaſon upon an Art which derives its Principles wholly from Nature, a Man, tho' of a very indifferent Underſtanding, may acquire it of himſelf, but never can acquire it ſo as to *excell*; for tho' in Oratory the Uninſtructed finds in his Mind every Faculty which is requiſite to have a clear Conception of the fundamental Truths of that great Art, yet, would he be completely Maſter of them, he muſt be directed by Acquirements unattainable by an untutored Capacity. On the other hand, a Man of Genius ought to cultivate an Acquaintance with thoſe ancient Maſters, both as they regulate the Range of his Imagination, and ſupply Ideas to his Judgment.

Eloquence and *Action* were found neceſſary, and practiſed from the moſt remote Antiquity; they have civilized the Manners of the moſt barbarous, they have recommended themſelves to the Eſteem of the moſt polite,

Nations.

Nations. The Art of *Declamation* is called Exterior Eloquence; and indeed the moſt forcible and the moſt irrefragable Arguments, when committed to Paper, can never affect us with the ſame Force as when animated by the Energy of Expreſſion and the Beauty of Action. When theſe meet, we may pronounce the Perſon who poſſeſſes them a complete Speaker.

The Initiates in the Art of *Declamation* ought never to expoſe themſelves to the Neceſſity of appearing in Public: For even their firſt Appearance demands the Abilities of a Maſter. I do not know if there is any thing in Life more irkſome than to hear a Speech pronounced in a ſhocking manner: One can excuſe himſelf from ſitting a long time before a wretched Picture, or before a Statue where the Proportions are unjuſt and ill-diſpoſed; but when a Man enters into an Aſſembly to hear a Speech or a Diſcourſe, Good Manners oblige him to ſit it out to the End, and it unfortunately happens that one has too many Opportunities of exerciſing his Patience, both by the frequent Occaſions that offer, and the numerous Profeſſors of the Art. The Pulpit, the Bar, Academies, Colleges, Clubs, Coffee-Houſes, the Parliament and the Play-houſe have all their Votaries, who eagerly purſue this Art.

It is a Miſtake if we imagine, among the

different Profeſſions I have named, that there are any who are under no Neceſſity of cultivating this Art. Even Authors who only appear in Print are intereſted; for there is no Author, who, if he has any Friends, does not, before he ſubmits his Work to the Cenſure of the Public, appoint a Set of Company to whom he cauſes his Work to be read, that from the Effects which it has upon them, he may form a Judgment of its Succeſs with the Public. As to Poetical Compoſitions we need not heſitate a Moment; for your Poetical Gentleman, tho' perhaps he has no Intention to appear in Print, loves to have his Verſes repeated all over the Town: Thus Writers both in Verſe and Proſe are under a kind of Neceſſity of underſtanding the Art of Speaking; for a bad manner of Pronunciation ſometimes throws the Audience into a *Diſguſt* and *Languor*, which is but a very indifferent Omen of Succeſs with the Public; tho' perhaps all the Matter is, that the Merits of the Work are not perceived thro' the Unſkilfulneſs of the Repeater.

I am ſenſible that among the Ancients, whom we muſt own to be our Maſters in the Art of *Declamation*, there were a great many bad Orators; therefore it is not at all ſurprizing that the ſame thing ſhould happen now. I own it is not, and in ſome meaſure it is eaſily accountable for; but this Obſervation

vation can be no Excuſe to thoſe to whom Nature has denied Talents for ſucceeding in *Declamation*, yet perſevere in a bad *Manner*, without endeavouring to correct it.

Beſides, I comprehend under the Art of *Declamation*, every Intercourſe of Converſation which is communicable by diſtinct, intelligible Language, no Diſcourſe is ſo familiar, no Chat ſo indifferent and undeſigning, as not to have its own Peculiarities of Expreſſion pointed out by Nature herſelf; and it is a Miſtake to imagine that an *Academic*, for Inſtance, is not obliged to be acquainted with the Rules of *Declamation*, provided every thing that he reads in the Aſſemblies where he is converſant, is delivered in an intelligible, and almoſt familiar, manner. I maintain the contrary, and affirm that there is no familiar Diſcourſe but what has Modulations of Voices that are proper or improper for its Subject. Every Man is obliged to a minute Search into the proper manner of expreſſing even the ſmalleſt Trifle that falls in his way; if he wants that, the Matter he has to communicate cannot have its due Effect.

I ſhall not here point out that immenſe Variety of Accents of which the Voice is ſuſceptible, and which ought to be employed on different Occaſions in order to do Juſtice to the vaſt Crowd of Sentiments that ariſe in

the Mind. I am perſuaded that it is impoſſible to write ſo upon this Subject as to leave nothing unſaid that may illuſtrate it; and to obviate every Difficulty that may occur. If *Quintilian*, treating of the Action of an Orator, ſays, that he ought not always to be tied down to Precepts, but ſometimes to conſult his own Genius, I believe I am juſtified in making the ſame Reflection upon the Turns of the Voice; I even think that Rules are unneceſſary, becauſe, generally ſpeaking, theſe Turns are not to be regulated by Precepts, and are indeed infinite, if every one, following his own Genius, be it *ſevere* or *eaſy*, *ſoft* or *violent*, varies them ſuitably.

Nature in forming Mankind ſeldom throws even the moſt minute Parts of two different Men into the ſame Mould; we find it very rare that two Faces have a ſtrong Reſemblance of one another, but it never happens that they cannot be diſtinguiſhed: We do not even find that the Eyes, the Hands, the Mouth, the Ears, or the Noſe of two different Men are exactly the ſame in Colour, Form, and Symmetry. This wondrous Conduct of the Father of Nature, who has ſtampt ſuch a Difference not only upon the *whole*, but upon the Members of a different Body, naturally leads us to another Reflection. Amidſt that ſurprizing Variety we may obſerve, that the Voices of Men never

exactly

exactly reſemble one another, which can only proceed from the Difference betwixt the interior Organs of the Human Body in ſeveral Perſons. How then can one imagine himſelf capable to mark out the different Turns and Cadencies peculiar to ſo many Millions of Men, each of whom has a different Voice adapted to his own particular Genius, and immediately under its Direction? It would require a great deal of Pains to point out in general thoſe different Sounds, the *melancholy*, the *chearful*, the *furious*, &c. and I even believe it is uſeleſs to put the Examples ſuitable to each in Writing; theſe muſt neceſſarily be conveyed by animated Expreſſion, and their Propriety can only be perceived in the fine Action of an able Maſter.

Could we penetrate and lay open our Soul to the Bottom, it would be no hard Matter to perceive the Source of every Modulation of the Voice; ſhe comprehends them all, becauſe they are neceſſary to her communicating to us thoſe wonderful Excellencies entruſted to her by the Author of Nature. But as the Matter into which ſhe is pent obſtructs her Operations, ſhe muſt *ſhake her Plumes*, and detach herſelf as much as poſſible from the Subſtance which confines her. In order to ſucceed in this in ſome meaſure, we muſt firſt deliver the Soul from the Incumbrance

of

of the Senſes; an Operation which, tho' violent, is by no means impracticable.

The Enthuſiaſm of Poets, and the deep Reſearches of Sages, in whatever Age they lived, were no other than the Effects of that profound Recollection of their intellectual Faculties which penetrated to the Bottom of the moſt retired Sentiments and Paſſions of the Soul. Here they ſurveyed Anger, Pity, Revenge, and the reſt of the Affections, undiſguiſed by Cuſtom, and unfettered by Intereſt. Thus every Expreſſion, every Lineament of the Pictures, which they gave of the Human Soul, was *warm*, *animated* and *juſt*, becauſe all drawn from the Life. Thus the Readers found nothing in their Works that could either be *improved*, *mended*, or *corrected*.

It was aſtoniſhing ſometimes to ſurpriſe theſe great Men in the *Criſis* of their *Enthuſiaſm*, when they appear'd quite *abſent*, without the Uſe either of Eyes or Ears. They were looked upon as Fools till they were awakened and rouſed from their profound Meditations; and then they at once left their beautiful *Viſions* and enchanting *Ideas*, into which they had been worked by their long Application. A Loſs that was generally irreparable; for too often it happened that theſe Sages and Poets could never more recall thoſe exquiſite Pleaſures of Imagination, nor recollect the inſtructive Reflections in which their

their Souls were wrapt before they awakened.

The Ancients termed *Poetry* a *Divine* Language, an Epithet that has been adapted by Poſterity; the firſt Divines among the Heathens were all Poets, they treated of their Gods in their Poems, and their Oracles were all delivered in Verſe. But whence comes it that we, who have a *Syſtem of Faith*, different from that of the Heathens, ſhould likewiſe call fine Poetry a *Divine Language?* For my own Part I am convinced, that the chief Reaſon, which both the Ancients and we had to give it this Appellation, was becauſe Poetry is regarded as a Language above Humanity; ſince in effect, when the nobleſt *Enthuſiaſm* of the Poet ſpeaks the Language of the Soul, we hear ſomething that is amazing, and which can admit of no other Character but that of *Divine*.

But how can we repeat or repreſent ſuch Compoſitions, otherwiſe than by cloathing them in the *Language of the Soul* likewiſe? Hence it appears to me by an unavoidable Conſequence that their Orators, Sages, and Poets entered into the ſame *Enthuſiaſm* when they repeated, which they felt when they compoſed, their Works. If the Soul which inſpired their Thoughts equally operated in pronouncing them, their Pronunciation muſt have been always juſt and infinitely variated

variated, from the moſt ſublime Heroics down to the moſt familiar Proſe. But one may eaſily conclude, that the Enthuſiaſm they fell into in *declaiming* was far leſs *intenſe* than that which aſſiſted in *compoſing*. Nature dictates this, and we ſee it every Day, at leaſt in appearance, put in Practice.

Every Orator after he ſalutes his Audience remains for ſome Moments motionleſs and ſilent; very often he ſhuts his Eyes; and it is generally believed that he does this in order to give the Spectators time to compoſe themſelves, that they may be more attentive to what he has to deliver: I even think that it is with this View that the greateſt Number of Orators obſerve ſuch a Practice; but both the Speakers and Hearers are under a Miſtake. Thoſe Moments which the Orator obſerves to himſelf ought to be employed in *recollecting* his *Ideas*; and a Minute is ſufficient for him to forget all Nature, and to fill his Mind entirely with his Subject. If he afterwards opens his Eyes when he begins his Diſcourſe, he ſeems to ſend them over all, but fixes them on no particular Object; and if by Accident his Looks ſhall reſt on one Point, he diſtinguiſhes it by no extraordinary Emotion; and this perhaps happens in the very Criſis of his Recollection. It is then that entering upon his Diſcourſe, be his Subject what it will, he feels that *Enthuſiaſm* which

is

is neceſſary to make him declaim in the *Sounds of the Soul.*

It is not a random Obſervation when we commonly ſay, *Such a Speaker does not animate his Expreſſion*; or *that there are ſome Paſſages in ſuch a Work that ought to be more animated.* It is becauſe the *Enthuſiaſm* I have mentioned is wanting both in the Compoſition and Delivery, and neither the *Speaker* nor *Author* have endeavoured to *animate themſelves*, that is, to write and to ſpeak according to the pure genuine Sentiments of the Soul, detached as it were from all Matter.

Words alone are not the only Means by which the Art of *Declamation* expreſſes the Sentiments of the Soul: Nature has implanted in the Eyes ſuitable Expreſſions which convey the Sentiments of the Soul to the Mind; and we may venture to ſay, that in Speaking and Action the Eyes poſſeſs the faireſt Place. *Cicero* and *Quintilian* have not forgot their Effects; and at preſent how many Orators do we ſee whoſe Excellencies would be more complete, did they not ſhut their Eyes during half the time they are ſpeaking? I ſhall not adviſe an Orator to go too much into this Method, whatever Reaſons may be given for the Practice; whether that an Orator, being conſcious of a treacherous Memory, is afraid that he may be diſcon-

diſconcerted; or that he imagines, ſhutting his Eyes for an Inſtant, and then opening them all of a ſudden, they ſerve as the Lightning that precedes the Bolt, which the Eloquence of the Orator is ready to diſcharge, and which indeed is a Maſterpiece of Action. In ſhort, whether it is the Effect of *Precaution* or *Art*, it is a Practice that is both ways dangerous; for by a Speaker frequently ſhutting his Eyes, his Expreſſion in a great meaſure loſes its Force.

The Eyes therefore ought indiſpenſibly to attend the *Enthuſiaſm* of Action, becauſe it is certain that by them the moſt inconſiderable Sentiments of the Soul may be expreſſed. We may even go ſo far as to ſay, that without the *ſilent Language* of the Eyes *Words* would ſink under *Expreſſion*; that almoſt *Divine Expreſſion* communicated by, and imparted to, the Soul; and we ought not one Moment to doubt that both in the great and the minute Parts of Oratory, the Eyes infinitely contribute to the Succeſs of the Speaker. If we obſerve narrowly, we ſhall find that our Eyes, without the Help of Words, can diſcover Fear, Fury, Shame, Reſolution, Archneſs, Tenderneſs, Indifference, Envy, Joy, Grief, and that inexpreſſible Number of Paſſions that crowd the Soul of Man.

If a Speaker is deeply ſkilled in his Art he

he will not be ſatisfied with barely making the Expreſſion of his Eyes attend that of his Tongue, but take care that the former ſhall have a Moment's Start of the latter. For Inſtance, in a Period, which ought to ſet out with a burſt of Anger, if the Speaker, in a little Pauſe which he artfully makes before he ſpeaks, ſhall by a ſingle Look expreſs his Anger, he can ſo effectually prepoſſeſs the Spectator with what he is to ſay, that he will all of a ſudden mould him into that Temper which moſt eaſily admits of the Impreſſions that he deſigns to convey in the reſt of his Diſcourſe. The ſame Obſervation holds of all the other Paſſions.

Amongſt all the expreſſive Operations of the Eye, there is one of great Conſequence. A Speaker ought to take care not to work himſelf up to Tears: Yet if they ſhall naturally flow, he ſhould not uſe the leaſt Efforts to ſtop them. The Grimaces of a Speaker, who forces himſelf to cry, are either *diſguſtful* or *ridiculous*; but when his Tears flow ſpontaneouſly, it rarely happens that the Emotions which attend them are *diſagreeable*. The Speakers who endeavour to weep never can thoroughly feel what they ſay; for when it is the Soul that ſpeaks, Tears require no intermediate Aſſiſtance to make them flow. If they are affected, the Cheat is eaſily diſcovered, and the Effect they have is either

none

none at all, or very bad; but if they are natural, they touch the Heart, and ſteal the good Wiſhes of the Spectators.

One can ſcarcely be perſuaded that the reſt of the Face enjoys the ſame noble Qualities of the Eyes, for expreſſing the Sentiments of the Soul; yet it contributes ſo much to Expreſſion, that the Words and the Eyes can never of themſelves ſucceed without its Help. We often find in a Speaker a Set of inflexible Features which the Spectators expreſs by a Phraſe which we daily hear, *An unmeaning Face.* The Language of the Face conſiſts in the Muſcles of which it is compoſed, with the Blood that animates them; and when theſe two are put in Action, they both by their Colour and Movement very ſenſibly paint the Sentiments of the Soul. The great *Shakeſpear* contains many Inſtances of this kind: In that Scene where *Othello* murders his Wife, after he gives her a Hint of his Intention, he makes her ſay:

— And yet I fear you, for you're fatal then
When your Eyes roll ſo. Why I ſhould fear
I know not,
Since Guilt I know not: Yet I feel, I fear.
Oth. *Think on thy Sins.*
Deſ. *They're Loves I bear to you.*
Oth. *Ay! and for that thou dy'ſt.*

Deſ.

Def. *That Death's unnatural, that kills for loving.*

Alas! why gnaw you ſo your nether Lip?
Some bloody Paſſion ſhakes your very Frame:
Theſe are Portents: But yet I hope, I hope,
They do not point on me.

In *Henry* VIII. when that Prince leaves *Wolſey*, the latter ſays,

— He parted frowning from me, as if Ruin
Leapt from his Eyes.

But the fineſt Inſtance of that kind I know, is in King *John*, when *Hubert* acquaints that Prince with the Death of *Arthur*. The Earl of *Pembroke*, who had never ſeen *Hubert* before, obſerving King *John* and him in cloſe Conference, ſpeaking of *Hubert*, ſays to the Earl of *Saliſbury*,

The Image of a wicked heinous Fault
Lives in his Eye; that cloſe Aſpect of his
Does ſhew the Mood of a much troubled Breaſt.
And I do fearfully believe 'tis done,
What we ſo fear'd he had a Charge to do.

Sal. *The Colour of the King doth come and go,*
Between his Purpoſe and his Conſcience,
Like Heralds 'twixt two dreadful Battles ſent:
His Paſſion is ſo ripe, it needs muſt break *.

It would be endleſs to multiply Inſtances of this kind from this Divine Writer: The only Reflection we ſhall make is, That theſe Paſſages ſhew to what *Excellence*, *Action* may be carried, if it copies immediately after *Nature*. We may obſerve at the ſame time that when *Shakeſpear* wrote, it is probable that the Actors, who played the Parts of King *John*, *Henry*, *Hubert*, and *Othello*, muſt have entered ſo far into Nature, as to be able to expreſs by their Features, and that too at the proper Inſtant, thoſe Paſſions which the Poet has ſo beautifully deſcribed in his Lines. Otherwiſe the Action muſt have been miſerably faulty, and the Excellence of the Poet would have chiefly ſerved to point out the groſs Defects of the Actor, by putting the Audience

* The Author in the Original gives a Quotation from *Racine*, but it falls ſo infinitely ſhort of what we find in almoſt every good *Engliſh* Dramatic Poet, that I believe the Reader will, when he looks into the Original, eaſily pardon my ſupplying it from *Shakeſpear*. I have likewiſe ventured to throw what he infers, from the Inſtance he brings, into another Light which may accommodate it more to our Stage, and avoid a Repetition of ſome Part of what goes before.

Audience in mind of what the latter ought to do. I am of opinion that the greateſt Actor, when he is to play a Part in a Scene where this dumb Action happens, has Reaſon to be ſtrongly alarmed with the Apprehenſions of his not ſucceeding. It is not enough that he feels all that a Man in the Circumſtance of the Character he repreſents may be ſuppoſed to feel, but he muſt likewiſe feel for others. This requires the deepeſt Recollection and the moſt exquiſite Senſe of the Paſſions of Mankind; a Senſe that can ariſe only from a humane Diſpoſition, for one of the chief Characters of *Ill-nature* is to be *inſenſible* of another's Anguiſh. Therefore what *Quintilian* ſays of an Orator may be juſtly applied to an Actor, that he ought to be a Man not only of great Good-Senſe, but of great Good-Nature. His Buſineſs is to move, and it is by the Language of the Heart alone that he can hope to ſucceed.

We muſt however take Care to diſtinguiſh the Difference betwixt an Alteration of the Features, in order to expreſs the Sentiments of the Soul, and the Grimaces that attend a *Play of the Muſcles.* The firſt makes a *Speaker valuable*; the other makes a *Scaramouch diverting*. If a Man enters ſtrongly into a proper Enthuſiaſm, and ſpeaks in the Accents of the Soul, his Features will naturally form themſelves into an Agreement with

his Subject by the Alteration both of his Colour and Muſcles. This Correſpondence of the Eyes and the reſt of the Features is abſolutely neceſſary in Expreſſion, in the ſame manner as in Muſic, the Charms of a fine Voice are heightened by the Inſtruments that play in Concert; for if the Eyes and Features do not correſpond with the Action, it is the ſame as if the Violin and Baſs, which play along with a fine Voice, ſhould leave off playing; and thus both the Pleaſure of the Muſic muſt be diminiſhed, and its Effects weakened.

If the Movements of the Body and the Arms do not poſſeſs ſo conſpicuous a Place in the Art of *Declaiming* as the Operations of the Eyes and Features, they are, however, neither uſeleſs nor deſpicable. A perfect Speaker, who has not the Advantages of a fine Attitude and graceful Air, loſes a great deal of his Merit; the Arms as well as the Face have their Eloquence; and if the Spirit of this Art, when ſtrong and lively, adds no Grace to Nature by the Management of the Arms, it muſt be owned that ſhe at the ſame time communicates leſs Force to her. For I readily agree that to move the Arms with Dignity and Grace is the Gift of Nature alone. It is a Right of Nature to form the human Body in what manner ſhe pleaſes. We ſee two Perſons equally well made, yet the

the Motions and Deportment of the one may be extremely awkward in every thing he does, and thoſe of the other very genteel and agreeable. If an Orator happens not to be endowed by Nature with the Talent of properly managing his Arms, he is defective in a very material Point. The Aſſiſtances he may borrow from an aſſiduous Practice before his Looking-Glaſs, and great Application, may give him an affected, but never the true, Motion of the Hand and Arm; and tho' it is ſaid that *Demoſthenes* took the Advice of a Mirror in regulating his Movements, I am of a quite different Opinion. Who knows if the Pains he took were not in order to bring to Perfection the Talents which he already poſſeſſed, rather than to purſue thoſe which he did not poſſeſs; and that he did not chuſe this Method to increaſe the Beauty rather than to correct the Faults of his Action?

An Orator who is conſcious that his Action is imperfect in this reſpect ought, inſtead of practiſing the *Action* of the *Arms*, to reſtrain himſelf from moving them at all; all his Cares ought to be directed to bring the other Parts of his Action to as high a Degree of Perfection as poſſible. If he once can attain to ſpeak with the *Enthuſiaſm* of the Language of the Soul, he will, without his own perceiving it, move his Arm, for the

Soul will then direct it, and therefore his Geſture never can be unjuſt.

As to thoſe to whom Nature has been ſo favourably partial as to endow them with this Embelliſhment, tho' they are under no Neceſſity of ſtudying their Geſture, yet they ought to take care not to be too laviſh of their Talents. It happens to them as it does ſometimes to certain Speakers, who having deep Lungs and a ſtrong Pipe, are always plying them with ſo much Violence, that they loſe the Merit of giving to their Expreſſions that Variety of Accents, ſo neceſſary for painting and underſtanding their Thoughts; in the ſame manner a Speaker, who is too laviſh of his Geſtures, finds ſo much Work for the Eyes of his Auditors that they are quite fatigued, and their Thoughts wandering and confuſed.

The Turns of Expreſſion, and the Motions of the Body and the Arms, exactly correſpond and go hand in hand with one another; ſo great is the Harmony with which they act, that if the one is faulty it immediately affects the other; for let the one of theſe Qualities be ever ſo perfect, it never can prevent the Diſadvantage that ariſes from a Defect in the other. And indeed, how can the Eyes of a Spectator, for Inſtance, be agreeably entertained by the great or graceful Management of the Body or the Arms,

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or prepare themſelves to communicate to the Mind the Pleaſure which ſhe ought naturally to feel, if at the ſame Inſtant his Ears ſhall be ſtruck with the Sound which gives his Mind a Senſation quite different from what ſhe expected to receive from the Eyes?

In every Part of the Structure of the human Body, from the greateſt to the leaſt, it is eaſy to diſcover the Finger of a Divine Operator in forming that Maſterpiece of the Creation. We ſee it ſo ordered by Nature, that all theſe Parts of our Body concur in the Art of Speaking. It is not ſo with other Arts, not even in thoſe that are mechanical. *Painting* *, for Inſtance, employs only one Part

* The Author in this Obſervation is too partial to his own favourite Art. Had he conſulted the Hiſtory of *Painting* in his own Country, he would have found Painters, whoſe Senſes were as much abſtracted by the Enthuſiaſm of their Art, as any Poet, Philoſopher, or Actor that ever was. And indeed, according to the Principles which he himſelf has laid down, it requires as deep a Recollection of Imagination, and as thorough an Acquaintance with the Images impreſt upon the Heart, to throw them out in *Painting* as it does in *Poetry* or *Acting*. Let any Man of Taſte or Genius but conſider the Divine Enthuſiaſm that appears in the Figure of St. *Paul* preaching, in the *Cartoons* at *Hampton-Court*; let him conſider the Attention, the Recollection, and the Reverence of the Spectators: Let him look upon any other Piece in that Gallery, he will find in every one of them Expreſſions which demonſtrates that *Raphael* has poſſeſſed, beſides the *Talents* of the fineſt Painter that ever was, thoſe that diſtinguiſh the beſt *Poets*, *Orators*, and *Actors*.

Vaſſari, in his Lives of the Painters, informs us, that when *Michael Angelo* worked as a Statuary, he appeared to be quite an

Part of our Senſes; and when one paints he can ſing, talk, hear, *&c.* The ſame may be ſaid of the other Arts. In the Art of Action, even Reflection is forbidden; and if that Operation of the Soul, which is ſo abſolutely Maſter of our Will, ſhall come athwart our Mind, and ſurprize us while we are ſpeaking, ſhe is forced back; becauſe the Intenſeneſs of what we are about drives her out of our Head and diſclaims her Company. Nor indeed are we Maſters of our Reflection even in other human Operations, during which, Thoughts crowd upon one another againſt our Will. Here we may conclude that this Art, which as it were enchants our whole Senſes, is almoſt *Divine*; that our Soul is the *Agent*, and our Members and Organ the *Miniſters* ſhe employs. I will therefore repeat it, that we can declaim only in the Accents of the Soul, and that without theſe there can be no Action.

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an Enthuſiaſt, and not poſſeſt of the ſame Degree of Reaſon as other Men, and it has been a very general, and a very juſt Obſervation of the moſt eminent Painters, that when they wanted to give a ſtrong Expreſſion to any Paſſion, their own Features involuntarily altered according to the Reſemblance they wanted to create.

Our Author's Obſervations, though he confines them to Action, are applicable, not only to Painting and Statuary, but to Muſic, Architecture, and to every Art which has *Beauty* and *Truth* for its Foundation. This Application indeed can only be partial, but had our Author acknowledged it, it would have been ſo far from diſparaging, that it muſt have done Honour to his Profeſſion.

I have elſewhere obſerved that the Theatrical Objects ought to be rendered very ſtrong and ſtriking, even tho' the Rules of Nature ſhould be a little tranſgreſſed, that the Expreſſion and Action may not be loſt to ſuch Spectators as ſit at a Diſtance from the Stage. I ſay the ſame thing both with regard to the Pulpit and the Bar; but both the Speaker and the Player ought to do this with great Caution, and only to a certain Degree, leſt he diſguſt the Spectators who are more near, by introducing too great a Deviation from *Nature*, and too ſtrong an Inconſiſtence with *Truth*.

I ſhall not take notice of the indiſpenſable Neceſſity of a proper Pronunciation, becauſe all the World is convinced of it; only I muſt obſerve, that the Man who cannot correct the Viciouſneſs of *habitual Dialect*, or *defective Nature*, ought never to act in Public, becauſe he runs the riſque of exciting Laughter when he ought to draw Tears.

In ſhort, to render the Propoſition I have advanced about Declaiming in the *Language of the Soul*, on which the good or bad Succeſs of a Speaker depends, more intelligible, I ſhall once for all take notice that this kind of Declamation is no other than *one's feeling the thing he pronounces*. I do not by this mean that which is commonly called *Good Senſe* in ſpeaking, and an intelligible manner

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in delivering, becauſe to *feel* is another thing; and in order to demonſtrate it, I muſt make a Digreſſion.

It is certain that an Orator, when upon an important Point, ought to endeavour to work his Audience into a Perſwaſion that he believes what he advances. This is the *whole* of his Art. A Man commonly before he alters his Opinion is in ſome doubt; he endeavours to inquire of himſelf whether the Change of his Sentiments is founded on Reaſon, or upon the enchanting Deluſion of the Speaker. The Speaker is therefore obliged in his own Vindication to prevent ſuch a Suſpicion from gaining Ground in the Mind of his Audience, or the Judges. For this end he muſt ſpeak ſo naturally as to force, as it were, the Spectators to believe every thing he is then ſaying, and that he ſpeaks from the Heart. For if the Audience, inſtead of hearing, were to read what he delivers, they would infallibly preſume that, in compoſing it, a thouſand Arts and Subtleties had been employed to make it ſucceed. On the contrary, that which ſeems to be as it were poured forth Extempore, carries with it an Air of *Truth* and *Sincerity*, which prepoſſeſſes the Audience in favour of every thing that is ſaid. If therefore a Speech is thus far juſt to Nature, the Illuſion is then complete; and if it ſhall be afterwards printed,

printed, the Juſtneſs with which the Orator delivered it will be ſtill admired, a Circumſtance that is highly advantagious to his Character. If a Player in his Part ſhall act ſo as to perſuade us that the Characters we ſee are not *fictitious* but *real*; if a Counſel ſpeaking for a Client ſhall ſucceed ſo far as to convince the Judge and the Audience that it is the injured Perſon himſelf who petitions for Redreſs, or the Offender who pleads for Mercy; I repeat it again, the Illuſion becomes then complete, then all that is *ſaid* is *felt*, and every thing paſſes in the *Language of the Soul.*

It is eaſy to underſtand that all I have ſaid of Speaking in general is applicable equally to *prophane* and *ſacred* Orators; however I cannot diſpenſe with touching more particularly on what regards the latter.

As to the manner in which a Preacher ought to deliver himſelf, his Subject is too ſerious not to make us ſenſible that it ought to be expreſſed in Accents *ſimple*, indeed, but full of *Dignity* and always *juſt*. Among thoſe who mount the Pulpit, a great many form themſelves upon *Theatrical Action* without following that natural Method commonly practiſed at the Bar. Therefore I think it will be neceſſary for us to examine this *Theatrical Action*, its Strength, and the Nature of its *Accents*, before we can decide whether

whether it is proper for the Pulpit. Except in Theatrical Declamation, (where every Period commonly begins or ends with an Elevation of the Voice) it muſt be granted that Words, when protracted and drawled out with a *Sameneſs of Accent*, as well as the Straining of the Voice, whether too vehement or ill-judged, are the perfect Averſion of Nature. A manner of ſpeaking different from what is practiſed, either in Muſic or in Speeches, is required in Tragedy. A Lawyer therefore will never think proper to plead in the ſtudied affected manner of Theatrical Declamation. Orators have in all Ages laid it down as a Maxim, that when they ſpeak, it is as Man to Man, and that therefore they ought to communicate their Thoughts in no other Accents than thoſe which are natural to Mankind.

I am perſuaded that it has been a great Error of the *French* Divines in imagining true *Theatrical Declamation* to be ſuch as is practiſed in *France*. The great Buſineſs of the Stage is, as I have already ſaid, to enchant the Spectators into a Perſuaſion that the Tragedy they are beholding is no *Fiction*, and that they who ſpeak and act are not *Players*, but *real Heroes*. But Theatrical Declamation in *France* has quite a contrary Effect; the firſt Words that are heard evidently perſuade the Audience that all is a *Fiction*, and the Players

Players ſpeak in Accents ſo extraordinary, and ſo removed from Truth, that it is impoſſible for one to be impoſed upon. Is this Theatrical Declamation then a proper Pattern for the Pulpit? No, ſurely. A *prophane Orator* is under no ſuch ſtrict Obligation to declaim according to Truth, and in the *Accents of the Soul*, as a *ſacred Orator* is; and it is certain that a Preacher who ſhall deliver a Sermon in the manner of a *Theatrical Declamation* can never make himſelf be *felt*. It may be here objected, that if an *Actor* can touch the Paſſions in a *Tragedy*, a Preacher may do the ſame in a *Sermon*, if he is a perfect Maſter of *Theatrical Declamation*. I anſwer in the Negative, and my Reaſons are as follow:

Moſt Part of *Spectators* in *France* are incapable of diſcerning that which may be called the *Juſtneſs of Action*. They are early accuſtomed to *Theatrical Declamation*: Young People do not trouble their Heads much about Reaſoning, and they grow old before they make any ſolid Reflections upon this Point. If an Audience thus diſpoſed is touched in ſeeing a Tragedy, it is becauſe they are under an *habitual Illuſion*, in which *Truth* has no Share. All the World knows that *Cæſar*, *Alexander*, *Hannibal*, &c. were Men like us; and every Body is perſuaded that they felt their ſtrongeſt Paſſions, and performed

formed their moſt Heroic Actions in the ſame manner as the great Men of our own Age; yet the very Spectators who are convinced of this, being prejudiced in their Youth in favour of the bombaſt manner of *Theatrical Declamation*, form their Ideas of theſe Heroes according to the Appearance they make, as perſonated by *Players:* That is, as Men quite above the common Level of Mankind, with a manner of walking, ſpeaking, and looking, different from the reſt of the World. But according to thoſe fictitious Ideas which the Spectators have adopted, and which deeply affect them, they form ſo ſtrong an Illuſion, that they ſuffer themſelves to be tranſported beyond Truth in every thing they ſee and hear. If Players therefore touch others with the Part they repreſent in Tragedy, it is only becauſe by Habit the Audience reconcile themſelves to the unnatural Method of Declamation, and thus the Effect that it ought to produce, by degrees, wears off. For could they ſee Nature and Truth in their genuine Appearances, they would ſoon ſhake off the Prejudices of Cuſtom. I ſhall only give two Inſtances of what I have advanced here, which ought to be tranſmitted to Poſterity, and eternally engraved upon the Minds of Players. Whoever remembers to have ſeen *Betterton*, or *Booth*, in *England*, muſt readily own that the whole Houſe was touched by their

ſimple

ſimple natural manner of Action; and Good Senſe dictates to us that we never ſeek for Pleaſure in *Fiction* when we can find it in *Truth*, eſpecially in a Profeſſion ſuch as that of a Player, which borrows its chief Excellencies from Nature herſelf.

In *France*, when a Stranger goes to a Playhouſe for the firſt time, he is extremely diſguſted with their *Theatrical Declamation*. It is true that the *univerſal Applauſe* which their Actors meet with, ſometimes debauches them into the prevailing Taſte of the Country; but I have found at *Paris* a great many *Frenchmen* who never go to ſee a Tragedy from an Averſion to this kind of Declamation, but it is an Averſion which prevails only with Men of great Genius and Taſte, who abhor, they ſay, to ſee *Nature* and *Truth* ſo mangled upon the Stage. How is it poſſible then that ſuch Declamation ſhould be a proper Pattern for a Preacher, who, if by a miſtaken manner of Pronunciation he diſguiſes the great Truths he delivers, may indeed convince the Reaſon, but never can touch the Paſſions, of his Audience? A *Grain of Falſhood*, if I may expreſs myſelf ſo, will ſowr a whole *Lump of Truth*, and the human Underſtanding can never bear to ſee them aſſociated.

It is likewiſe inconteſtibly true that the general manner of Declaiming in a Preacher, tho'

tho' it ought always to be true and natural, yet ought ſtill to admit of three different Diſtinctions in its Character. One accommodated to *Sermons*, one to *Panegyrics*, and one to *Funeral Orations*. *Zeal*, *Admiration*, and *Grief*, ought to regulate the manner in which theſe three Subjects are treated, ſo that the Speaker may always ſuſtain, and in his Diſcourſe give the Predominance to that Manner which is moſt ſuitable to his Subject.

It is eaſily perceived that each of theſe three Manners, *Zeal*, *Admiration*, and *Grief*, does not exiſt independant of the other, and that an Orator may have occaſion to practiſe them all in handling the ſame Subject. For Inſtance, in a Sermon where *Zeal* ought to predominate, the Accents of *Admiration* and *Grief*, as well as other Paſſions, are admitted according as the Thoughts, that fall in, require. In the ſame manner in *Panegyric*, where the predominant manner ought to be that of *Admiration*, at the glorious Actions of the Perſon who is celebrated; all other Manners, ſuch as *Zeal and Grief*, may be employed as Occaſion offers, and may even be indiſpenſible. I ſay the ſame thing with regard to *Funeral Sermons*; and tho' it would ſeem that they are of the ſame Nature with *Panegyric*, and that *Admiration* of the great Actions of the Perſons who are celebrated to the Audience ſhould have a large Share in the

the manner of delivering them, yet here Grief ought to be the predominant Manner. For it is certain that tho' the glorious Actions of Saints and Heroes claim the ſame Degree of *Admiration*, yet it is with this Difference, that we remember the firſt with † *Admiration* mixt with *Joy*, becauſe they are looked upon as happy in Heaven; and the great Actions of the others muſt be celebrated with *Admiration* mixed with *Grief*, ariſing from the Remembrance of the Loſs we have juſt ſuſtained by their Death. Theſe are the Reaſons why *Grief* ought to predominate in a *Funeral Oration*, not only over *Admiration*, but over all the other Manners that fall within the Compaſs of an Orator's Practice. Thus, as to the different Manner of employing theſe three different Paſſions, the Art of an Orator conſiſts in diſpoſing the immenſe Variety of the Accents which he uſes ſo as that they may never in the leaſt obſcure that which ought to predominate in his Subject. I ſhall ſay no more on this Subject in Writing, becauſe the moſt inſtructive Precepts on that Point, and even thoſe that may be really uſeful, ought to be communicated by the

† The Reader thro' all this Paſſage will no doubt make Allowance for our Author's being a *Roman-Catholic*, and living in *France*.

Voice, as I have obſerved before, and not by Paper.

As I have ſaid in the Beginning of theſe Reflections, that a young Orator ought never to appear in Public, until he has attained a certain Degree of Perfection; I own I cannot help repeating the ſame thing here: He ought not to expect that his Audience will ſit patiently hearing him for thirty Years, till he has obtained Perfection in his Art; for I grant he may acquire it by long Experience. A young Orator may anſwer me, that it is the *Exerciſe of an Art that forms the Artiſt.* I know it well, and according to the Reflections I have made, I know likewiſe that in practiſing it he ought to follow the Method of *Demoſthenes.* This great Man, it is well known, ſet out by practiſing his Art two or three times in Public; he found he did not ſucceed, he then ſhut himſelf up for ſome Years, and then emerg'd into Public the Wonder and Miracle of *Greece.* Let a young Orator do the ſame, let him make an Eſſay of his Art in Public, and if he finds he is deſtitute of Talents to ſucceed, let him either throw it entirely up, or never appear again until he is a complete Maſter. How abſurd muſt a contrary Conduct be! The great Men of all Sciences are at Pains to conceal the Productions of their Youth, becauſe they know them to be imperfect. Painters, Sculptors,

tors, and Poets never put their Name to their firſt Eſſays. Workmen can never paſs for Maſters if they don't produce ſome finiſhed Maſterpiece, which proves that they deſerve that Title. And ſhall a young Orator be ſo imprudent as to declaim in Public, without having beforehand exerciſed his Talents and corrected his Faults in Private?

It is amazing that in all Ages and Nations of polite Learning, no Schools for *Declamation* have ever yet been eſtabliſhed. The Maſters of public Schools and Colleges give Boys ſome ſlight Notions which they never reduce to Practice in any of the Stages of Civil Life; but indeed as the principal End of their Employment is to teach the dead Languages, they have no Time to beſtow on other Studies; beſides the Boys whom they have commonly under their Care are too young and incapable either to make ſolid Reflections by themſelves, or to comprehend the Precepts of their Maſter. Should an old Orator fill a public Chair and teach the Art of *Declamation*, he would be as uſeful to Society as moſt of the fine Eſtabliſhments that are in great Cities. Young People would then ſtudy Oratory when moſt of their other Studies were over; when they were advanced in Age, and conſequently more capable to comprehend the Reaſons that would be offered, but above all, they

would retain the natural and ſtriking Impreſſions conveyed by animated Speech in the Practice of *Declaiming* in all the different Branches of that Art.

THE

THE ITALIAN THEATRE.

THE Remarks which in another Work I have † already made upon the Riſe of the Drama in *Italy*, ſufficiently juſtify me in ſuppoſing, that it has admitted of no Interruption ſince it ceaſed to be exhibited on the *Latin* Theatres. But when it forgat its original Grandeur, it grew ſo low as to ſtrole from Town to Town, where it was performed in their open Places; and tho' the inſipid, indecent Buffoneries, repreſented in this manner, are far from deſerving the Name of Comedies, yet we can in them at leaſt trace the Seeds of that barbarous Weed which throve ſo well, till aboliſhed by Religion.

The *Italian Drama* languiſhed for a long time in this Condition, till towards the Beginning of the twelfth Century; it then by Degrees recovered its Vigour, and admitted the Embelliſhments of Dialogue, but as

† See my Hiſtory of the *Italian* Theatre.

yet it was only exhibited in private Houſes. About that Time, taking Advantage of Subjects and Characters borrowed from Religion, the Drama began to appear with more Pomp, and the Invention of Printing introduced her to the Acquaintance of the Public: Some Comedies printed about ſixty Years after this great Diſcovery, that is, about the Year 1520, are yet extant; and tho' the Names of the Authors are unknown, yet it is eaſy to diſcern from the Uncouthneſs of the Language that they muſt have been compoſed more than a Century before, and their very Titles imply that they were printed long after they were wrote. It is therefore very probable that there were ſome others worſe wrote, conſequently older than theſe, and perhaps now extant in Manuſcript; but the printed Comedies which I ſpeak of are ſo licentious, both in the Conduct and Sentiments, that from them we may eaſily form a Judgment of the Merit of thoſe which preceded them.

Bibiena in his *Callandra*, *Machiavelli* in his *Mandragola* and *Clitia*, and *Arioſto* in his *five Comedies*, with the other beſt Dramatic Writers who flouriſhed in the firſt forty Years of the ſixteenth Century, for the moſt part, formed themſelves upon theſe ancient Models in their own Language, tho' full of Impiety and Indecency; all they have done being to correct the Form and

Conduct,

Conduct of the Fable in order to render it more regular and complete. But notwithſtanding the undoubted Proofs which may be drawn from their ancient Comedies that have come to our Hands in Print, (and of a much older Date than the Age of *Callendra*, which was acted for the firſt time towards the End of the 15th Century,) the *Italians* date the Commencement of this Drama no higher than that Period; and they reckon all the Pieces written in the preceding Ages to be no better than ſo many *Farces*, tho' they are very long, and divided into *five Acts*. Some Pieces of this kind are called in the Title-Pages *Farces*, and others, *Comedies*. It is likewiſe remarkable that a great many others in the Title-Pages are named *Farces*, and in the Epilogue, *Comedies*. From this, it is plain, that their ancient Poets, by theſe two Words, underſtood the ſame thing. But the *Italian* Writers, without reflecting upon this Circumſtance, very violently deny them the Rank of *Comedies*, and place them only in the Claſs of *Farces*. For my own Part, by their Leave, I call them all Comedies, but *defective* ones, and the Product of an *Infant* THEATRE.

The Modern *Italian* Writers have choſen to ſtifle the Merits of their Predeceſſors to recommend their own Correctneſs in Dramatic Performances. It appears as if they

had it in View to conceal from the Public the Writings for the Stage almoſt for two Ages, that they may glory in thoſe of one Period which does them Honour; their Aim being to perſuade the World that the *Infancy* of their *Theatre* produced only *Maſterpieces*, and not *trifling*, *lame Performances*, as has been the Caſe of all the Theatres in the World, ſince the Time of the *Greeks* and *Latins*. We can eaſily perceive that theſe proceeded gradually, and for a long time as if it were in Leading-ſtrings, before they arrived to Perfection, or even before they had corrected their original Abſurdities. As therefore the ancient *Italian* Comedies, which have come to our Hands, and which are not very numerous, are deſigned in their Frontiſpieces only under the Title of the *Ancients*, but without any Information to the Reader, or the leaſt Light by which we can be enabled to determine their Date, let us enquire if their Repreſentations of Subjects taken from Scripture can furniſh us with any Helps for aſcertaining the Period that gave Riſe to the Modern *Italian* Drama.

Anciently the Paſſion of our Lord was repreſented at *Rome* in the *Colliſee*. The moſt celebrated *Italian* Authors leave us no room to doubt of this, and if we take the Pains to examine them, we ſhall find in their Works plain and indiſputable Proofs of the Point

we

we are now treating; but nothing confirms this Truth more ſtrongly than the Tragedies that are extant upon the Paſſion of our Lord.

It is no leſs certain that the Cuſtom of repreſenting the Paſſion of our Lord was entirely aboliſhed towards the End of the Pontificate of *Paul* the third, that is to ſay, in the Year 1546, or at moſt in 1549. This we expreſsly learn from the * Authors here referred to; but it will be very difficult for us to determine at what time the Cuſtom of repreſenting the Paſſion commenced, or to aſcertain its Original. We find indeed that it is of old ſtanding; for the Authors I have quoted, unanimouſly concur in favour of its Antiquity: They fix the Period when theſe Tragedies were aboliſhed, but leave us entirely in the dark as to the time of their Riſe, probably becauſe they themſelves were ſo: Therefore all we can advance on this Head muſt be founded on mere Conjecture.

Some able Antiquaries of Modern *Rome* are however of Opinion, that the Repreſentations

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* Andreas Fulvius, Page 146.
La Deſcription de Rome, 8vo. Printed Anno 1643, Page 487.
Il Ritratto di Roma Moderna. Printed in 1645. Page 435.
Roma Ricertaca. Printed in 1699. Page 73.
Guido Pancirolli in Roma Sacra e Moderna. Printed in 1725. Page 37.
Crèſcembini ne Commentarii de la Volgar Poeſia. Page 242.

tations of the Paſſion of our Saviour at the *Colliſee*, could not have been introduced ſooner than in the Year 1449; ſo that, according to this Authority, they muſt have laſted for near a hundred Years, becauſe they ended under *Paul* the third, towards the Year 1549. This Opinion is founded on the Teſtimony of *Creſcembeni*, in his *Hiſtory of Poetry in his Mother-Tongue*, where he cites *Cionnacci*, and ſpeaks in the following manner of *Pious Repreſentations*. I ſhall tranſlate his own Words: " The moſt ancient that " have come to our Hands, ſays he, is, ac- " cording to *Cionnacci*, (who ſays that he " had the Manuſcript) that of *Abraham* and " *Iſaac*, by *Francis Beliari*, who died in " the Year 1484." The ſame *Cionnacci* adds, that at the End of the Manuſcript he read theſe Words; " The above Piece was " played, for the firſt time, at *Florence*, in " the Church of *Saint Mary Magdalen*, in " the Year 1449;" and *Creſcembeni* affirms, that this was the firſt from Holy Writ that ever was compoſed or acted in *Italy*. But if I am not miſtaken he is in the wrong, becauſe the Manuſcript affirms no ſuch thing; it only informs us, that the Play of *Abraham and Iſaac* was repreſented, for the firſt time, in the Year 1449. But it does not ſay that this was the firſt Poem of the kind that ever had been compoſed in *Italy*. Had it been

been ſo, the Author would not have failed to have challenged to himſelf the Honour of the Invention, and to have let us know that he was the firſt that brought the Sacred Tragedies upon the Stage; therefore Mr. *Creſcembeni* attributed to him an Honour which the Author could not claim, and which if he had, all *Italy* might perhaps have given him the Lye.

Some Pages before, *Creſcembeni*, in ſearching for the Original and Riſe of Sacred Repreſentations, rejects a Fact which I look upon as deciſive in this Point, and therefore ſhall tranſlate the Paſſage literally. " We " cannot, ſays he, by any means fix upon " the Time when they began; tho' *Vaſori*, " in his Life of *Buffalmacco* the Painter, " gives us an Account of this Feaſt which " was made upon the *Arno* in the Year " 1304, where a Machine, repreſenting " *Hell*, was fixed upon the Boats, and " which *Cionnacci* imagines may be that of " *Teofilo*, at the End of which, as he aſſerts, " Hell was repreſented, *ſince it is remarked* " *that towards the End of it, the Devil is* " *returning to Hell with a* Jew, *and an* Angel " *diſmiſſes the Spectators. Or rather that of* " Lazarus *the rich and* Lazarus *the poor,* " *at the End of which the rich* Lazarus *in* " *Hell in vain begs Relief of the poor one* " *who is in* Abraham's *Boſom.* However, from

" from the Time and Place of Repreſenta-
" tion, (it happening about the Calends of
" *May*, when every thing that was exhibited
" was of the prophane kind,) we ſhall not
" place this Entertainment among the Sa-
" cred Feaſts, nor affirm that this was the
" firſt that ever was repreſented in *Italy*."

I am far from thinking this Concluſion of our Author juſt. This Entertainment might have been repreſented on the River *Arno* as a prophane one, but ſtill the Subject on which it is built is ſacred or moral; ſo that if it was not of the one kind, it ought always to be underſtood to be included under the Rank and Denomination of the other. Therefore inſtead of refuting this Opinion, I ſhall make Uſe of the Diſcovery itſelf as a Direction for tracing, to more remote Antiquity, Works of this Nature, and endeavour to fix the Foundation of a probable Conjecture on this Subject.

If I might venture to give my Opinion on a Point ſo obſcure, eſpecially after the Authority which I have quoted above, I own I ſhould be very much of the Mind that the Repreſentation of the Paſſion of our Saviour at the *Colliſee* took its Riſe much about the Time of the Eſtabliſhment of the Fraternity *del Gonfalone*. This I think we may reaſonably conclude from the *Statutes* of that *Company*, which were printed at *Rome* by

by *Bonfadino*, in the Year 1584, Page 74, an Abſtract from which I ſhall here tranſlate.

" The principal Deſign of our Fraternity " being to repreſent the *Paſſion of* JESUS " CHRIST, WE ORDAIN, that in caſe the " Myſteries of the ſaid Paſſion are repre- " ſented, our ancient Orders ſhall be obſerv- " ed, together with what ſhall be preſcribed " by the *General Congregation.*"

Two Reflections naturally ariſe from this Paſſage. It appears from thence, that the principal and eſſential *Conſtitution of the Fraternity del Gonfalone*, was in order to repreſent the *Paſſion of our Lord*; it appears likewiſe that they had certain Regulations to direct them in the Management of theſe *Repreſentations*, and in the *Execution* of the *Tragedy*. But is it credible that the Brethren, *del Gonfalone*, had deviated from the principal Regulations of their Order, eſpecially if we conſider that the Obſervation of theſe Statutes was not only agreeable to their Genius, but even pleaſed the general Taſte of the whole Nation? Every Body is very well acquainted with the *Paſſion* the *Italians* have for Shows; beſides the Public knows with what Earneſtneſs all new Eſtabliſhments are embraced. But this Fraternity was founded in the Year 1264, as appears by the Preface to the Statutes of the Company,

and

and by *Octavio Panciroli*, in his *Teſoro naſcoſti di Roma*, Page 488. According to theſe Authorities, the Repreſentation of our Lord's Paſſion muſt have begun about the Year 1264, and continued for two hundred and eighty eight Years. This is upon a Suppoſition that the Authors I have already quoted are in the right, when they affirm that they were aboliſhed towards the End of the Pontificate of *Paul the third*, that is to ſay, about the Year 1549. This is my firſt Conjecture.

The *Italians* boaſt that their Theatre is the Original and Model of all the others in *Europe*. I know they are in the right of it; but this Aſſertion is founded only on an ancient Tradition. And without their ſearching into the Original of the *French*, *Spaniſh*, and *Engliſh* Theatres, they having firmly and implicitely believed that at whatever Time the *Italian* Theatre was opened it muſt have been the firſt. Therefore they were at no Pains to fix the preciſe Æra, and did not care whether it was two Centuries ſooner, or two Centuries later. They have one poſitive Inſtance of a Repreſentation of a *Divine* or *Moral* Nature, exhibited upon the *Arno* in the Year 1304, but this they reject, in order to fix it one hundred and ſixty Years later; by this means they deſtroy another Æra, which is that of the Fraternity *del Gonfalone*, eſtabliſhed in the Year

1264

1264, and fix the firſt Repreſentation of a Holy Subject ſo late as the Year 1449. Were this Computation inconteſtably true, the *Italians* could have no Reaſon to boaſt of their being the Fathers of the Drama in *Europe*, but ought to be contented with admitting that they are but the Scholars of other Nations, ſince no Fact is more certain than that the Myſteries of the Old Teſtament were repreſented at *London* in the Year 1378, and in *France* in the Year 1398, or rather ſooner, as we ſhall prove in a proper Place. It is therefore evident that the *Italians* muſt have learnt the Dramatic Art from the *Engliſh* and *French*, if we admit that their Plays did not begin at the Time when the Fraternity *del Gonfalone* was eſtabliſhed, which was in 1264, or about the Time of the Entertainment preſented on the *Arno* already mentioned, which was about the Year 1300; and if, as *Creſcembeni* and the other modern *Roman* Antiquaries contend, their firſt moral Repreſentation was ſo late as the Year 1449.

What we have quoted from the Statutes of the *Fraternity of the Gonfalone*, ſuggeſts another Reflection on this Head. They enact, "That in caſe the Myſteries of the Paſſion "ſhould be repreſented, they ſhould con- "form to the *Ancient Orders*, and to what "ſhould be preſcribed by the *General Con-* "*gregation*."

" *gregation.*" Therefore the Repreſentation of our Saviour's Paſſion was prohibited only with regard to the Place where it was exhibited, and *Paul* the ſecond only aboliſhed it at the *Colliſee.* It is even rational to preſume that the Fraternity exhibited them ſince that Time; but in other Places, for thirty ſix Years after the Prohibition by this Pope, it appears by new Statutes that they had a Privilege of playing, *if they thought fit.* For if the Repreſentation of our Lord's Paſſion had been abſolutely prohibited by the Pope in the City of *Rome*, the Inſertion of this Clauſe was quite uſeleſs, nor would it have been lawful to have inſerted it at all, had it been expreſsly contrary to the Orders of the Holy See.

All Holy Tragedies have been written in Verſe; but we ought not to rely upon the printed Editions to determine whether the moſt ancient that we have were acted in the ſame Shape in which they are printed. Theſe Editions inform us that they were tranſcribed, in order to render them more legible and more agreeable to the Modern Taſte; and this was done as often as a new Edition was publiſhed, or the Play, after ſome Interval, was revived. Among others, there remains an Edition of one of theſe Tragedies, where the principal Point I have been endeavouring to prove, is clearly explained,

ed, and the Tranſlation of the Title Page is as follows. "Of the Paſſion, Death, and "Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, being a Tra-"gical Repreſentation, by *John Baptiſt Fila-"ur*, the third Edition, corrected from a "great many Miſtakes, and enlarged with "the Addition of a great Number of Lines "by *Salvatore Maſſonio*, and played in the "City of *Aquila* on Holy Thurſday, in the "Year 1614." The Repreſentations therefore of the Paſſion were not aboliſhed in *Italy* ſixty five Years after the Prohibition iſſued out by *Paul* the third. This too ſerves to confirm the Opinion I have advanced, that this Prohibition extended only to the Place of Repreſentation, and not to the Thing repreſented.

Repreſentations from *Holy Writ* continued in *Italy* to 1660, that is, three Years after the Pontificate of *Paul* the third; and that not only in private Places, but much oftner in Churches upon the Celebration of the Feſtivals of the Saint who gave Name to the Church; as we may gather from the Title-Pages of a great Number of Plays; but had they been prohibited and aboliſhed by the Pope, the *Italian* Biſhops never would have ſuffered them to have been repreſented within their *Biſhopricks*, much leſs in their *Churches*: But the Medley of *Sacred* and *Prophane*, together with the Looſe Comedy, interſperſed

in theſe Performauces, diſguſted the Spectators, and in a little time they were quite laid aſide.

From all I have ſaid above, I believe we may fairly conclude, that if the Paſſion of our Lord was not preſented at the *Colliſee* for the firſt time, in the Year of the Eſtabliſhment of the *Fraternity of the* Gonfalone, which was founded in 1264, it appeared there very ſoon after. Admitting this, I believe, it will naturally enough follow, that this Fraternity were not the firſt Inventors of theſe kind of Repreſentations, but that they had before been privately exhibited upon the Stage, tho' in a very bungling manner, and that the Fraternity had it in View to act them with greater Magnificence, and in a more correct manner at the *Colliſee*. What End would the Inſtitution of this Fraternity have ſerved, ſuppoſing this to be the principal Object they had in View, if they deferred putting it in Execution for a *hundred fourſcore and five Years?* It is therefore reaſonable to believe that the Execution of this Project was not deferred very long; and it would be a Contradiction to all the Rules of Probability, ſhould we affirm that they did not commence till the Year 1449.

Forty Years intervened betwixt the Eſtabliſhment of the Fraternity, and the Entertainment exhibited upon the *Arno* at *Florence*,

rence, in the Year 1304. And I take it for an undiſputed Fact, that during the intermediate time, the Paſſion of our Lord, with the other Holy Repreſentations, as well as other prophane Comedies or Farces as they are ſometimes termed, begun already to be in Vogue, and that they even had appear'd a long time before the Eſtabliſhment of the Fraternity; tho' perhaps they were the firſt who erected a kind of a Theatre in a public Place, ſuch as the *Colliſee*, where they were to be repreſented.

Dante was the firſt who introduced Poetry among the *Italians*; and without relying upon what *Leonardo Aretino* makes *Dante* himſelf ſay, in his Life *, 'that Poetry had commenced a hundred and fifty Years before his Time,' it is ſufficient for my Purpoſe, that it began to prevail in the Days of *Guido Guinicelli*, *Guittone*, *Bonaguinta*, and *Guida da Meſſina*, who lived before *Dante*, as they flouriſhed in the Year 1200; this confirms my Conjecture, that the Drama was introduced into *Italy* towards the Year 1200, which is before the Eſtabliſhment of the Fraternity *del Gonfalone*, who probably formed the Plan of their Inſtitution upon the Cuſtom which prevailed in the Country of repreſenting the Paſſion, on ſome other Entertainment, the Subject of which was either Moral or Divine.

* Page 97.

The *Italian* Writers never advance any thing as Fact for which they have not *Ocular Demonſtration*; and when they once ground an Opinion upon Facts, if they happen to differ amongſt themſelves, they are perpetually at odds; the Contradiction goes round, and the Difference for ever remains irreconcilable: Conſidering the Uncertainty in which they have left us, I am very ſenſible that if any Body ſhall adopt the Conjectures, which appear to me to be well founded, I ſhall be the means of bringing him into a great deal of Trouble and Diſpute, but far contrary to my Intention. The Invention of Printing happened at a Time when *Italy*, of all the Nations in *Europe*, poſſeſſed the greateſt Share of Learning, and by this means the Works of their Anceſtors ſuffered not a little; for their Men of Learning did not apply themſelves to the Publication of any Work (eſpecially of the poetical kind) that was not in a poliſhed Stile, and a correct Turn. Thus it is by great Chance, that any thing which was otherwiſe has at all came to our Hands. In this Conduct they were not imitated by the other Nations in *Europe*, as we ſhall ſhew in a proper Place; theſe laſt having printed every thing compoſed by their Anceſtors be it good, bad, or indifferent, if written two or three hundred Years before, and by this they have a conſiderable Advantage over the

Italians,

Italians, in tranſmitting to Poſterity many Works which ſerve as the Documents and the Guides of Hiſtory. Had the *Italians* done the ſame thing, we ſhould not have at this Time been at a Loſs how to fix the Date of the *Italian Drama*.

Since the Year 1500 no *Italian* Poet has profeſſed to write for the Theatre, in order to pick up Money; Dramatic Poetry having ſince that Time been an *Art*, but not a *Trade*. The Dukes of *Ferrara*, *Florence*, *Urbin*, and *Mantua*, ſuffered Plays to be acted only within their own Palaces. The Academy of *Sienna* was the firſt that, by its own Example, encouraged other Learned Bodies to compoſe and repreſent correct Comedies. Their Example was followed during the XVIIth Century; and the hired Actors, who till that Time had always acted extempore, never acted any Piece that had not before been printed.

As to what regards the modern *Italian* Theatre, I ſhall begin by giving the Reader ſome Notion of the Structure of the Stage itſelf, and the Character of the Spectators. The Spectators in almoſt all the Cities of *Italy* are *reſtleſs* and *noiſy*, even before the Play begins. In their Applauſes they are violent; and when they would diſtinguiſh a favourite Poet or Actor, they cry as loud as they can *Viva—Viva*. But if they have a

Mind to damn the one, or hiſs the other, they bawl out *Va dentro*, and very often they make the poor Actor feel a further Proof of their Indignation by pelting him with Apples, and loading him with a great deal of Abuſe. But the Actors who have Reputation and Merit meet with great Eſteem and Applauſe; and in the very Cities where the Audiences are moſt unruly, they immediately become calm when a favourite Play or Actor appears on the Stage.

But there are ſome Cities where the Audience is always quiet and civil, even tho' neither the Play nor the Players are agreeable; the Spectators ſhewing no other Reſentment than by not returning to the ſame Entertainment, after having ſat it out two or three times; and inſtead of Noiſe and Bawling, they expreſs their Diſpleaſure by a Contempt that is a tacite but an equally ſtrong Proof of Diſlike. This Conduct prevails in the Cities of *Genoa*, *Lucca*, and *Florence*; however the Audiences there know how to diſcern and do Juſtice to a Poet or Actor of Merit.

In *Italy* they are entirely Strangers to the Cuſtom of exhibiting Theatrical Entertainments thro' the whole Year, the Towns where they are at all eſtabliſhed having their ſtated Times for Playing, which do not happen always at one Time of the Year: The Comedians, during the Space of twelve

Months, viſit a good Part of *Italy*. The Theatres of *Venice* are open from the Month of *October* to the firſt Day of *Lent*. In many Cities of the two *Lombardies*, the Spring of the Year is allotted for Comedies; and they are repreſented in the Day-time without any Lights, becauſe the Play-houſes are built in ſuch a manner as to be ſufficiently enlightened by the Sun. Theſe Play-houſes, or rather Halls, are ſometimes a plain Booth erected in large *Areas*, almoſt like that of *Verona*, where every Year ſuch Booths are built in the *Arena* of the great Amphitheatre.

In the Cities where Comedies are acted by the Day-light, the Repreſentation goes on with great Regularity, which ariſes not ſo much from the Characters of the Spectators, as from the Difficulty they would find to eſcape public Cenſure.

The Theatres are open in *Rome* only the laſt eight Days of the *Carnaval*. And ever ſince *Innocent the Eleventh* prohibited Women from acting on the Stage, young Men ſupply their Places in Habits of Women.

The *Italian* Theatres are magnificent, they commonly having four Rows of Boxes, beſides a lower one, which forms as it were a Partition round the Pit. There is at *Venice* a Theatre with ſeven Rows of Boxes; this is diſtinguiſhed by the Title of *Saint Samuel*,

according to the general Cuſtom of deſigning their different Theatres by the Name of their reſpective Pariſhes where they are built. It is an eſtabliſhed Cuſtom all over *Italy* to ſit in the Pit.

In *Venice* one may ſee a Comedy for ſixteen Sols of *Current* Money, which is paid at the Door, where they receive a Ticket. But then, if one deſigns to ſit, he muſt pay ten Sols more; but if the Pit is not full, they are ſuffered to ſtand on the Floor, towards the Bottom of the Houſe. As to the Boxes, every Body who is admitted there muſt pay for a whole one to himſelf.

The Theatres at *Venice* commonly contain *four and twenty*, and ſometimes *thirty* Boxes in a Row; but theſe Boxes can hold no more than ſix Perſons, ſo that admitting they were all full, they would contain no more than fourteen hundred Perſons in all *. The great Theatre in *Milan* is one of the largeſt in *Italy*; but none of them are comparable to that of *Parma*, which, like thoſe of Ancient *Rome*, has no Boxes, but Benches ariſing in form of an Amphitheatre.

At *Venice* the Spectators go maſqued to the public Diverſions, which is a great Convenience to the Nobles, eſpecially the Senators and

* The Author muſt mean *the whole Houſe being full.*

and the other Perſons who are in great Offices; becauſe while they are maſqued they have no Occaſion to diſtinguiſh themſelves by the Habit that is peculiar to their Quality or Employment, and even the *Doge* himſelf in this Diſguiſe, may go without his Attendants. But if they have a Mind, they may go with their bare Faces, which gives an Opportunity for the Women of Quality and Diſtinction to be ſeen.

There are commonly in that City eight Theatres open; four for Comedies, and four for Operas. As the Diſtinctions of Ranks muſt be obſerved here, the Women of Quality place themſelves always in the Front-Boxes; and the *Courtezans*, who for ſome time paſt have uſed to maſque themſelves, ſit in the Row immediately below. The Men and the Women, who are to ſit in Chairs in the Pit, take great Care not to put on fine Cloaths, it being the Cuſtom to ſpit out of the Boxes into the Pit, and to throw into it the Remains of what they have been eating, which renders it extremely diſagreeable.

The Boxes are hired either for a Year or a Day. But what they call their Year begins, as we have obſerved before, in the Month of *October*, and ends on the laſt Day of the Carnaval. The Price of theſe Boxes are not fixed, it being regulated according to the Pieces that are repreſented; the Licencer of the

the Stage is the Judge how much they ſhall be enlarged or how much diminiſhed; and that again is commonly regulated by the Merits of the Piece and of the Actors; the Succeſs of a new Piece having ſometimes mounted an Upper Gallery to the Price of a Sequin, or ten *French* Livres; a Front Box to ten Sequins, and the others in Proportion. There are very few Cities in *Italy* which have not more than one Theatre; they having generally two or three, and the Prices paid at the Door are commonly regulated according to the Rules that obtain at *Venice*.

Having thus ſpoken of the Structure of the Stage itſelf, I proceed now to the Pieces repreſented on it. Since the Year 1500, the *Italians* may boaſt with Juſtice that their Drama has been very complete. Perhaps it is the only Theatre in *Europe* which can date its Excellency ſo far back; and with regard to the Rules of Writing, as well as the Genius and Taſte of the Writers, it has proved the Model of all the Theatres that have been ſince erected.

Towards the Middle of the XVIIth Century, *Spaniſh* Plays took Place inſtead of their moſt perfect Dramatical Performances; and ſo prevailing was this univerſal Degeneracy of Taſte, during the laſt fifty Years, that the beſt Pieces of their Anceſtors, which came into their Hands, were but very little eſteemed

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in the Country. A Poetical Production, in the Manner of *Petrarch*, met with but very few Admirers, and was generally looked upon as low and inſipid. The Productions for the Stage met with the ſame Fate; for during all that Period, if a good Play appeared, it was received with Contempt, and a Man would have bluſhed to ſay that he had read it. In ſhort, the Taſte for the *Spaniſh* Drama, which muſt be owned to have its Beauties, was carried in *Italy* to the higheſt Pitch of Extravagance. The Productions in this way are very numerous in *Italy*, and moſtly in the laſt I have mentioned.

But the Madneſs began to abate, and towards the End of the Century, Men of Learning, Wit, and Taſte, appeared almoſt thro' all the Cities of *Italy*, who by their Writings and Academical Diſſertations, in Seminaries or Societies of Learning, revived and eſtabliſhed good Senſe in every Province of Poetry. With regard to the *Drama*, Tranſlations from *Racine* and *Corneille* were oppoſed to the prevailing Extravagance of Taſte, and the mercenary Players, in imitation of theſe private Judges, ſtruck into the Road of good Senſe; thus after a hard Struggle betwixt Truth and Error, *Taſte* again prevailed in *Italy*.

Since the Year 1700 a great Number of good Tragedies have been compoſed by the Wits

Wits of *Italy*; ſome upon the *French*, ſome upon the ancient Plan of Writing; the latter are the Productions of the fineſt Pens of *Italy*, who diſſatisfied with the *French* Manner have, but not with all the Succeſs that one could wiſh, endeavoured to revive that of the *Greeks*; we have likewiſe ſeen Comedies in both Manners appear, and all in Verſe: It is true, they are ſo very few that the *Italian* Stage, ſince the Year 1700, is extremely low, if we compare it to thoſe of *England*, *France*, and *Spain*, which every Year increaſed their Stock by the Acceſſion of new Plays.

The Barrenneſs of the *Italian Stage* is doubtleſs owing to the Authors that write for it reaping no Profit from their Labours. A Man of Wit and Fortune, ſometimes for his own Amuſement and Satisfaction, compoſes a Theatrical Performance and gives it to the Players. Others, ſuch as *Martelli* and *Gravino*, ordered their Productions of that kind to be printed before they appear upon the Stage, leaving the Players at Liberty, after they are printed, to repreſent them in what Manner and at what Time they pleaſe; but theſe Hits ſo ſeldom happen, that we have all the Reaſon in the World to fear, a true Taſte for the Drama will be ſoon entirely extinguiſhed in *Italy*.

Men of Wit and Spirit, who don't always ſhare equally in the Gifts of Fortune as of Nature,

Nature, follow another Road for attaining their Ends. Time has inſenſibly deſtroyed moſt Part of the Academies; and in thoſe that remain, the ſame Taſte does not prevail. If from time to time, and merely as the Fancy ſtruck them, they take it into their Heads to compoſe ſome Pieces for the Theatre, they chuſe rather to tranſlate them from the *French* than to compoſe Originals. This is the Practice in the Colleges of *Rome*, *Parma*, and almoſt all the other Colleges of *Italy*. The Eaſe with which the *French* Plays are tranſlated debauches thoſe into that Practice, who have Genius enough to compoſe Originals; and *Gigli*, one of the beſt Poets of his Age, after having compoſed a great many original Pieces, tranſlated the *Tartuff* of *Moliere* under the Title of *D' Pilone*. Hence I foreſee that the *Italian* Poets will degenerate into mere Tranſlators, and my Prediction is already but too much fulfilled.

Tho' in *Italy* the *Dramatic* Poets have never wrote for Money, yet we find by the *Dramaturgia* of *Alacci*, that their Number was very conſiderable. According to that *Catalogue*, it amounts to no leſs than one hundred and thirty nine *Tragic* Poets, and three hundred and eleven *Comic* Poets of a correct Age, *i. e.* ſince the Year 1500.

The ſame Author, whoſe Account reaches

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no farther than *A. D.* 1660, gives us the Titles of the Pieces, together with the Names of the *Authors* who have wrote *Tragi-Comedies*, *Paſtorals*, and *Sacred Tragedies*; and adding theſe to the Poets in my *Catalogue*, we will find that the Number of *Italian Dramatic Poets*, in the Space of one hundred and ſixty Years at moſt, amounts to one Thouſand two Hundred and Twelve. But this Catalogue leaves a Gap unaccounted for of no leſs than ſeventy ſix Years back from this Date; and if, amongſt that infinite Number of Performances, there were ſome of them taken from the *Spaniſh*, or written in the Manner of that Nation, yet a ſufficient Number of good ones will be found to perſuade me that if the *Italian* Theatre had been as productive of Rewards to the Poets, as the other Thearres of *Europe*, it muſt have produced both better Performances, and in greater Number than any other; for when Glory and Profit meet together, they form the ruling Principle of a Genius.

As we have treated of the *Dramatic Poets* from the Year 1500 to 1660, it will be of ſome Uſe to make the World acquainted with the Number of Pieces that were printed in that Time. In the Collection of the *Vatican Library* we meet with no leſs than two hundred and thirty five prophane *Tragedies*, five hundred *Comedies*, two hundred and thirty

thirty ſeven *Paſtorals*, one hundred and twenty *Tragi-Comedies*, and four hundred and five *Sacred* or *Moral Tragedies*. *Alacci* in his ſixth Liſt gives a Catalogue of Tragedies, Comedies, Paſtorals, and other Dramas which have not yet been publiſhed, but which were written before the Year 1660; and not contented with adding to theſe an Hiſtorical Account of them, he points out the very Libraries and private Repoſitories where they are preſerved in Manuſcript: But ſince the Days of *Alacci*, not above twelve of theſe Pieces have been printed; in this Liſt we find one hundred and ten *Prophane Tragedies*, ſeventy *Sacred* or *Moral* ones, two hundred and three *Comedies*, twenty *Paſtorals*, and a great Number of *Operas*. And in a kind of *Supplement* which he has added, he reckons up twelve *Tragedies* more, eighteen *Sacred Repreſentations*, fifteen *Comedies*, ten *Tragi-Comedies*, two *Paſtorals*, and a great Quantity of *Operas*, which ought to have been added to his Catalogue. Upon ſumming up theſe different Numbers, we ſhall find that the *Italian* Stage has produced above two thouſand Plays; and if the Catalogue of ſeventy ſix Years, which intervenes betwixt this preſent Time and the Year 1660, ſhall ever appear, I make no Queſtion but that *Italy*, in the Space of two hundred Years, has enriched

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their Theatre with upwards of five thouſand Plays. We may advance this Fact with the greater Aſſurances, as the *Dramaturgia* of *Alacci* contains only a Collection of thoſe Pieces that remain in the *Vatican Library*, and not thoſe that were printed betwixt the Years 1500 and 1660, and which are ſtill more numerous than theſe he has mentioned. I have a great Number of Tragedies and Comedies of which *Alacci* takes no Notice, and I daily find others that neither of us knew any thing of before. This makes me believe that we never ſhall have a complete Collection, or even a genuine Catalogue of all the Pieces belonging to the *Italian Theatre*.

Italy, which at that Time contained almoſt as many *Sovereigns* as it contains *Cities*, each of which had their particular Theatres, could not make a Collection of their Plays with the ſame Eaſe as the *French*, *Spaniards*, or *Engliſh*. As theſe laſt were all under one Sovereign, the Theatres were the ſame in their ſeveral Capitals, and there was no great Difficulty of finding, in the ſame Cities, all that was neceſſary for Information on this Head in their moſt ancient Regiſters, or in their Libraries. But in *Italy*, a Man, whether prompted by his own Curioſity, or obliged to obey the Commands of his Prince to make ſuch a Collection, muſt have viſited all theſe Cities in order to collect the *Memoirs* and

and *Anecdotes* peculiar to the ſeveral Entertainments exhibited in every City or Palace, and then indeed he might have left us a general Catalogue of all the Pieces belonging to the different Theatres; therefore it is to Chance alone that we owe a great Number of Pieces preſerved in the Libraries and Cabinets of the Curious.

But if true *Comedy* ſhall be loſt among the *Italians*, they will always retain a kind of *Comedy*, tho' not deſerving that Appellation, and more properly to be called *Farce*; I mean that ancient mercenary *Comedy* which was played *extempore*, and ſucceeded to the *Latin* Comedy, which at firſt indeed was low and immodeſt, but afterwards was improved into greater Decency and Correctneſs. Should the Ruin of Learning become general in *Italy*, and ſhould her *Species* of *Dramatic* Poets ever be extinct, the Ignorance of the People would give them a Reliſh for this kind of *Comedy* or *Farce*. It is therefore to be preſumed, that it will continue but too long ſhould it be once introduced, but its Reputation can never be ſolid, becauſe it muſt always depend upon the Abilities of the Actors.

Theſe Farces, the Original of which is to me unknown, and which have run thro' all the Courts of *Europe*, have led many *French* Writers into a Miſtake, when they have been

ſpeaking of their own Theatre, and have been obliged to run a Parallel betwixt it and thoſe of other Nations. The Abbe *Aubignac*, the Author of the *French* Theatre, printed in 1674, whoſe Name I am unacquainted with, *Moreri*, and every Author who has handled this Subject, in ſpeaking of the *Italian* Theatre, have mentioned only the *extempore Farces* performed by Actors in Maſque, becauſe, in reality, this was the only Species of the *Drama* known in *France* ſo late as the Reign of *Henry* the Third, which was about the Year 1578.

The *Italian* Players don't always uſe to play their Parts *extempore*; they have, as I ſhall ſhew by and by, ſometimes learned it by heart, according to the different Ages in which they lived. But in thoſe Courts in *Europe* who are not ſo well acquainted with the *Italian* Language, and where the *Italian* Players are ſought after and encouraged, they have gone entirely into the *extempore* Manner, and it is under this Character that they are known over all *Germany*, and particularly in *France*. Hence aroſe the Miſtakes into which the *French* Authors I have named were led, in ſuppoſing that the *Italian* Drama conſiſted *formerly* entirely in thoſe Sorts of Buffoonries; and upon this Suppoſition, without examining further, they have pronounced the *French* Theatre to be ſuperior both

both in Tragedy and Comedy, to all the other Theatres in *Europe*. In this Opinion they are not perhaps far in the wrong; but it would not at all derogate from the Merit of the *French* Theatre, ſhould their Authors examine the State of the *Italian* for an Age or two before, and upon a juſt Compariſon of the Merits of both, found the Superiority which they attribute to their own Countrymen. I am pretty much convinced that the Glory of *Corneille*, *Racine*, and *Moliere*, would receive an additional Luſtre by comparing them with Rivals, and not as they do, found their Triumphs upon a Conqueſt, where the Forces of the Parties are by no means equal, or rather where they can have no Opportunity of a Struggle. It was in order to diſſipate this Miſtake which ſo generally prevails in *France*, that I have given to the Public the long Catalogue of Tragedies and Comedies in my *Hiſtory of the* Italian *Theatre*.

The *French* Authors have run into another Miſtake with regard to *Italian* Players, in maintaining that as they only excel in the Mimic Way, they are incapable of doing Juſtice to any thing that is great and pathetic. But this Notion is effectually deſtroyed, not only by the *Italian* Company eſtabliſhed at *Paris* in the Year 1716, but by other Players of that Nation, who at different

Times have ſtudied their Parts both in true Tragedy and Comedy. The Action of the Company I have mentioned, in the Tragedies of *Merope* and *Andromache* in *Italian* Verſe, and in the Tragi-Comedies of *Hercules*, *Sampſon*, and *Life is a Dream*, and many other Pieces, have ſufficiently convinced the Public that *Italian* Players are as capable as thoſe, of any other People, to touch the Great and Pathetic.

Beſides we find in *Italy* an Excellence not eaſily to be met with amongſt other Nations. No *Italian* Company ever contains more than eleven Actors or Actreſſes; of whom five, including the Scaramouch, ſpeak only the *Bologneſe*, *Venetian*, *Lombard*, and *Neapolitan* Dialects. Yet when they are to act a Tragedy which requires a large Number of Players, every one of them is employed; even *Harlequin* lays aſide his Maſque, and they all declaim in Verſe as properly as if they were Natives of *Rome*. This Practice renders them capable of doing Juſtice to the moſt ſublime Sentiments of Dramatic Writing, and at the ſame time of agreeably imitating the moſt ridiculous Oddities in Nature. This is a Merit which we may ſay is peculiar to the *Italians*, ſince amongſt the Companies of other Nations, which generally conſiſt of at leaſt thirty Actors, every one is determined by his natural or acquired Qualifications in

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the Choice of the Part he undertakes; and it is very rare that we meet with one or two who can ſuſtain different Characters, and ſuit themſelves to every accidental Variation of Characters and Perſons.

Of the ITALIAN OPERA.

FROM the first Rise of the *Italian* Theatre, Music has always been intermixed with Action. The Method of introducing it into the Drama has varied according to the several Junctures. At first it began by the Chorus's always being sung, then the Prologues, Interludes in Verse, and Epilogue. When the Theatre, by the fine Productions of a more polished Age, began to improve, the Practice of intermixing Music with the Representation of true Tragedies or Comedies wore out in twenty or thirty Years, and both were represented in the Taste and Simplicity of the Ancients; Tragedy having a Chorus that declaimed, and Comedy a Prologue that was repeated. By this sudden Change, we may easily conceive that the Use of Music was quite laid aside, because inconsistent with these regular Representations, and despicable, as its being one of the Parts of Farce which had been just abolished.

Some time after, the Poets abandoned that Severity for which they had been so remarkable at the Beginning of their Reformation; nor does any *Italian* Writer inform us of the Reasons. I am inclined to believe that the Audiences

Audiences were diſguſted with the dry Exactneſs of Rules, and that their Poets accommodated themſelves to the Taſte of the People, which demanded perhaps ſomething more entertaining. After that, Tragedies were repreſented without a Chorus, Muſic was again admitted into the Prologue of Comedies, and by degrees they introduced Interludes which had no relation to the main Subject; ſometimes thoſe Interludes were unconnected the one with the other, and each made an Action apart; * but very often three or four Interludes formed a continued Action, which was a great Embelliſhment to the principal Piece.

It will not be improper to obſerve, that the three Examples referred to in the Note are of the noble and exalted kind, and that they are adapted to the Nature and Genius of the ſeveral Pieces to which they were ſubſervient, which are either Paſtorals or Tragi-Comedies; as there are likewiſe Interludes of another kind, adapted to the Manner and Spirit of Comedy.

We muſt likewiſe obſerve, that at this Time the Theatre begun inſenſibly to decline, and that inſtead of exact Tragedy and regular Comedy, Paſtorals, Tragi-Comedies, and Interludes were introduced, which daily

* *L'Aurora Ingannata; Glauco Schernito; Daſnè converſa in Laura.*

degenerating, at laſt produced the monſtrous Births we have mention'd.

Theſe muſical Interludes, interrupted by performing the ſeveral Acts in the principal Pieces, afforded a formal and pompous Show; and if they had been ſeparated from the Paſtoral, or Tragi-Comedy, to which they were annexed, they wanted nothing but a *Name* to denounce them a Species of Repreſentations quite different from Tragedy or Comedy.

The *Italian* Writers have been at a great deal of Pains to ſettle the preciſe Time in which the Opera begun. Some maintain that the *Euridice* * of *Rinuccini*, acted at *Florence* in the Year 1600, upon Occaſion of the Marriage of *Mary de Medicis* to *Henry* the Fourth, was the firſt of this kind. Others aſcribe the Merits of its Invention to *Emilio del Cavalieri*, who, in the Year 1590, exhibited *Il Satyro* and *La Diſperazione de Fileno*, both muſical Paſtorals, at *Florence* in the Great Duke's Palace.

Without troubling myſelf to criticiſe upon their ſeveral Diſcuſſions of this Point, I ſhall take my Date from that muſical Tragedy, which the Senate and Republic cauſed to be acted in the Palace of the *Doge* before *Henry* III, when he paſſed thro' *Venice*, in his Return from *Poland* in 1574‡. All the *Italian* Princes

* *Rinuccini*: *Rime*, p. 13.

‡ *La gloria della poeſia è della muſica.* Printed at *Venice* without a Date.

Princes about this Time publickly exhibited Operas in their own Palaces. It is however univerſally agreed that the firſt Opera appeared at *Venice* in the Year 1634. ‡

The Book I have quoted informs us, that during the Carnaval, in the Year 1637, the firſt public Opera, called *Andromachus*, was exhibited on the Theatre of St. *Caſſan.* Next Year at the ſame Time, and upon the ſame Theatre, a ſecond was exhibited, called the *Magician Thunder-ſtruck.* Theſe two firſt Operas were exhibited with great Magnificence, and at the Expence both of the Poet and Muſicians. In the Year 1639, the Theatre of St. *John* and St. *Paul*, on which nothing but Comedy had been acted, was rebuilt; and the firſt Piece exhibited upon it was *La Delie de Jule Strozzi*, where alſo they exhibited the *Armida*, as an Entertainment during the Carnaval. The Theatre of St. *Caſſan* acted at the ſame the Opera of *Thetis* and *Deleus*; and in the Autumn the other Theatre exhibited that of *Adonis*, which had ſo great a Run, that it was acted, without Interruption, from the Month of *October* till Lent.

In that ſame Carnaval, which began the Year 1640, the old Theatre called St. *Moſes*'s, the Foundation of which is unknown, exhibited the *L' Arriane d' Octavio Rinuccini*, which many Years before had been acted in the

‡ *Idem.*

the Palaces of ſome *Italian* Princes, and which, according to the Edition in 1608, is prior, by thirty two Years, to the Repreſentation I have juſt now mentioned.

I ſhall not here pretend to enumerate all the different kinds of Operas which for theſe hundred Years have appeared upon the *Venetian* Stage; they would diſguſt the Reader, and ſwell this Volume to an uſeleſs Bulk: I ſhall content myſelf to refer the Curious to a Book I have already quoted, which is a little Volume in Twelves, printed at *Venice*, entituled *The Glory of Poetry and Muſic*. This Book is a Catalogue containing two hundred and ſixty eight Pages; the Bookſeller has added, by way of Appendix, a Liſt of the Operas that have been preſented for that Year. This Book is printed without any Date, and began to appear in the Year 1730. One may eaſily judge how much Operas are in Faſhion at *Venice*, when he is told that at certain Seaſons they play every Day, and in ſix Theatres at the ſame time.

No Sovereign ever ſpent ſo much upon theſe Repreſentations as the *Venetians* have done, except perhaps *Ranuce Farneſe*, Duke of *Parma*, who amazed all *Italy* by the Entertainments which he preſented in the Year 1690, on Occaſion of the Marriage of his Son Prince *Edward*. The World yet talks of two Operas which he preſented, the one

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The two *Bebienas*, theſe eminent Architects and celebrated Painters now alive, have convinced all *Europe*, by their grand Decorations, that a Theatre may be adorned without Machinery, not only with as much Magnificence, but with more Propriety. Machines produce a magical, or, if you will, a marvellous Effect; and we are often obliged to call to Mind the Contrivance of the Theatre, and that every thing that we ſee is moved by Pulleys, Ropes, Springs, and Weights, in order to prevent our Senſes from being impoſed upon, ſo as to believe what we ſee is repreſented to be real. I ſhall give one Inſtance of ſuch an Illuſion.

Cato of *Utica* is the Subject of an Opera preſented upon the Theatre of St. *John Chryſoſtome* in the Year 1701. As *Cæſar* with his Army is ſuppoſed not to be far from that Scene where the Action is laid, and that the Inhabitants of the Province had prepared an Entertainment for him upon the Banks of the River, the Ground of the Stage repreſents a Field, towards the Middle of which there was hung in the Air a Globe, reſembling that of the World; this Globe was obſerved by degrees to advance towards the Front of the Stage, to the Sound of Trumpets and other Inſtruments, and all this without the Spectators being able to diſcern the Pulleys and Machines that directed the whole. In the Moment

Moment when it comes oppoſite to *Cæſar*, it opens into three Parts, repreſenting the then three known Parts of the World. The Inſide of the Globe ſhines all with Gold, Precious Stones, Metals of all Colours, and contains a great Number of Muſicians. Thus we ſee what the Contrivance of a Theatre is capable of effecting, which is artfully to conceal the Pulleys and Springs; for by means of the firſt Scaffold being built above the Stage, it is eaſy to ſuſtain and conduct in the Air a Machine of what Weight you pleaſe; and in ſuch a Situation a Spectator ſtands in need of his Reflection, to put him in Mind that all is purely the Effect of the Machinery and Diſpoſition; but in the mean time this is what the Poet and the Muſician ought to endeavour to make him forget.

Players by their Art ſometimes imitate Nature ſo perfectly, that they perſuade the Spectator that all they ſee is real; but it is a much harder Taſk for the Muſician to attain to this, it being much more difficult for them to accommodate their Notes to the Paſſions of Anger, Grief, Sorrow, and even to Death itſelf. The Poet and the Engineer, far from encreaſing theſe Difficulties by unnatural Decorations, ought to repreſent to the Spectators the moſt elevated Ideas only with that Art which is moſt proper to render them more ſuſceptible of the Impreſſion that is to

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be conveyed. The principal End of the Stage is Illuſion, and that End can be obtained only by keeping to what is probable.

As to the *Italian* Muſics, all *Europe* agree that towards the Middle of the laſt Century it arrived at *Perfection*, and continued in that State to the Beginning of this. The Compoſitions of *Scarlati* the elder, *Bononcini*, and many other excellent Maſters, are undiſputable Proofs of this. But theſe twenty Years paſt, the great Reputation it had acquired among Foreigners is a good deal diminiſhed, becauſe the *Italian* Taſte of Muſic is now changed. In ſhort, at preſent it is all a Whim; *Strength* is ſought inſtead of *beautiful Simplicity*; and *Harſhneſs* and *Singularity* is ſubſtituted inſtead of the *Expreſſion* and *Truth* which diſtinguiſhed the former Manner. The ſurprizing Capacity of their Singers, it is true, begets *Admiration*, but moves no *Paſſion*; and Judges ſay juſtly, that it is unreaſonable to force a Voice to execute what is too much even for a *Violin* or a *Hautboy*. This is the true Reaſon why the *Italian* Muſic falls ſo far ſhort of Perfection in *Expreſſion* and *Truth*, and why it is threatened with total Ruin if it ſhall continue to deviate from that Manner which formerly brought it to Perfection. The new Manner however has got ſuch Footing in *Italy*, that even Maſters in the Art are obliged in

in conformity to the general Taſte, contrary to their better Judgment, to deviate from the Simplicity and Greatneſs of the ancient Manner, both in vocal and inſtrumental Performances.

As to their Muſicians, the *Italians*, by their Method of *manufacturing* a Voice, have always a great Number of excellent Singers both with regard to the Fineneſs of the Pipe, and their Skill and Taſte in Singing; ſuch as *Piſtocco*, *Paſqualino*, *Siface*, *Mattecucio*, *Cortona*, *Luigino*, and many others, whoſe Memory the Muſicians of our Days will ſcarcely be able to efface. The Female-Performers have at all times diſputed with the Males the Excellence of Singing. We may inſtance, among theſe who have excelled for half the laſt Century, *Franciſca Vaini*, *Santa Stella*, *Tilla*, *Margaretta*, *Salicoli*, *Reggiana*, with many others. But ſhe who in our Days retained the true Manner of *Italian* Excellence in Muſic, was the celebrated *Cuzzoni*; every Body knows that in the Year 1724 ſhe ſung with univerſal Applauſe a Motet and a Pſalm compoſed by *Bononcini*, in the Chapel of *Fontainbleau*. She ſupported at *London*, for ſix Years, the Glory of the *Italian* Nation, and was recalled thither in the Year 1734, notwithſtanding the Bickerings and Diviſions betwixt the *Italian* Theatres. Her Salary was about fifteen hundred Guineas a Year,

as

as was that of *Francis Bernardi*, known by the Name of *Seneſino*, an excellent Muſician, who never ſuffered himſelf to be carried away by the Taſte for the new Muſic. But what is very extraordinary in *Italy*, and over all the World, he joined to the Charms of his Voice, the Merit of *Action*, and the Player was as accompliſhed as the Muſician.

I ought not here to forget the famous *Fauſtina Bardoni Aſſe*, whoſe Talents and Profits were equal to thoſe of *Cuzzoni*, whom I have mentioned. It was owing to her extraordinary Capacity and her ſurpriſing Command of Voice, that *Fauſtina* was obliged to invent a new manner of Singing. As ſhe has been extremely well received all over *Europe*, many Attempts have been made to imitate her; but her Imitators having neither her Pipe nor her Art, have only ſpoil'd their own Manner; and it is owing to this wretched Imitation that a bad Manner both of Singing and Compoſition prevails now ſo much in *Italy*, from whence it has been communited to all *Europe*.

I have choſen to ſpeak of *M. Carlo-Broſchi*, ſirnamed *Farionelli*, laſt of all, both as he is the lateſt and youngeſt of the celebrated *Italian* Muſicians. He ſings in the Manner of *Fauſtina*; but it is owned by the beſt Judges that he infinitely outdoes her, having brought his Art to the laſt Degree of Perfection

ſection. In the Year 1734 he was invited to *London*, where he ſung three Winters with univerſal Applauſe. He arrived at *Paris* in 1736; and after he had ſung in the moſt eminent Families, where he was received and treated with great Diſtinction, the King did him the Honour to hear him perform in the Queen's Chamber, and applauded him in a Manner that aſtoniſhed the whole Court. The Admiration he created was ſo univerſal, that it is on all Hands agreed *Italy* never did, and perhaps never will, produce ſo complete a Singer. He is now in *Spain*, and kept by the King and Queen to ſing in their Chamber. That Prince by his Liberality, and the large Appointments he allows him, has completed the Good-Fortune of *M. Farinelli*, who by his great Talents and perſonal Merits deſerves all he enjoys.

Formerly, the moſt able and celebrated Muſicians at *Venice* received only one hundred *Roman* Crowns for performing for the whole Autumn and Carnaval; and if thier Appointments reached to one hundred and twenty Crowns, or ſix hundred * *French* Livres, it was conſidered as a Mark of great Diſtinction and a Proof of ſuperior Merit. But for theſe thirty Years paſt, a fine Singer,

* About 28l. Sterling.

either Man or Woman, has always had upwards of one hundred Golden Sequins, which is about 550 *l.* Sterling. *Sancta Stella*, *Fauſtina*, *Cuſzoni* and *Farinelli*, were all paid on this Footing; but theſe prodigious Expences have ruined all the Undertakers of the Opera at *Venice*, and drained the heavieſt Purſes in *Italy*. On this Account, and in order to raiſe the vaſt Sums that are paid to their Performers, they have for ſome Time paſt retrenched their expenſive Machinery.

Three Livres of *Venetian* Money gains Admittance into the Hall of the Opera, thirty Sols a Seat in the Pit, and the Boxes are in Proportion. If we compare theſe poor Receivings with the Expences that are neceſſary for ſupporting the Magnificence of theſe Shows, we may eaſily account for the Loſſes which the Undertakers of the Opera ſuſtain; it being impoſſible, that for the four Months, during which theſe Entertainments laſt, the Receiving ſhould equal the Outgiving; for the *Venetian* Opera begins at ſooneſt in the Middle of *November*, and continues only to the laſt Day of the Carnaval.

As it is experienced all over *Europe*, and eſpecially in *Italy*, that the beſt Performers, and the fineſt Voices cannot of themſelves procure Succeſs to an Opera, unleſs its Muſic and Drama is good; and that on the contrary,

trary, a good Drama and good Muſic, and very often the laſt alone, may ſucceed very well, tho' the Performance is but indifferent; therefore at *Venice*, where this is more ſenſibly felt than elſewhere, they follow a Method quite different from the ancient.

Since the Opera began there, ſix hundred and fifty Operas have appeared in leſs than one Century, tho' they were repreſented only in the Winter. Since the Year 1637, which is the Date of the firſt Appearance of the Opera at *Venice*, to the Year 1700, we compute only three hundred and fifty ſeven, excluſive of five or ſix, which were reacted on account of their great Succeſs. It appeared ſurprizing, that in the Space of ſixty three Years in *Venice* alone, three hundred and fifty Operas ſhould appear, but that Myſtery is now ſolved. The Undertakers, not willing to run the Riſk of Novelty, almoſt every Year react the Operas which ſucceeded in the preceding, nay, they ſometimes act the ſame Opera two Nights ſucceſſively; a Practice which diſguſts the Spectators, and not a little blemiſhes the Glory of the *Italian* Theatre, ſo fertile in Novelty.

Some of the *Italian* Poets who have wrote in this way, have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a noble and chaſte Verſification, and others by a poetical and elevated Imagination; but

the greateſt Part of them do not deſerve mention. Formerly, the Opera comprehended all Subjects, but, ſince the Machinery has been laid aſide, it deals no longer in Fables, Divinities, Muſic, Paſtoral, and the like, but confines itſelf entirely to Hiſtory.

The old Operas that have come to our Hands, are Proofs of the *Italian* Genius in treating Hiſtorical Subjects. But at preſent, a Barrenneſs of Imagination ſeems to have ſucceeded this Fertility; the *French* Tragedies being commonly pilaged, to furniſh out their Plans, their Scenes, and even their Thoughts.

All the Inconveniences we have mentioned may ſoon reduce the Opera into the ſame Situation with the Comedy: And we may talk ſome time hence of the *Italian* Opera, in the ſame manner as we now do of their Comedy of a *correct Age*, by eſteeming the Antients, and deſpiſing the Moderns.

THE

THE SPANISH THEATRE.

I BELIEVE one might venture to affirm, that the *Spaniards* were the first of any People in *Europe* who wrote for the Stage, could it not be proved that ever since the Decay of the *Romans* the Theatre has been open in *Italy* without Interruption. It must indeed be owned that Impostors and Mountebanks contributed not a little to its Continuation; for they were the chief Supports of low Comedy, if one may bestow that Name upon their Buffoonries, which were Productions of a very monstrous Kind, in which the Laws of Dialogue were overlook'd, and the Propriety of Language disregarded. Tho' these Mountebanks afterwards added a Lustre and Dignity to their

Entertainments, by exhibiting them either in Courts or in the Galleries of Noblemen's Houſes, yet this is no Reaſon why we ſhould believe that Comedy was reduced to any Form, either in *Italy* or any other Part of *Europe*, before the Eleventh or Twelfth Century. Theſe Entertainments did at beſt reſemble the *extempore* Farces which the *Italian* Comedians act at this very Day; and it is even to be thought that their Form and Model were not near ſo perfect and unexceptionable as that of the preſent *extempore* Farce.

I don't intend by this to deſtroy what I have elſewhere ſaid; for I am perſwaded that in the thirteenth Century there were Comedies wrote in *Italy*; but as they never ſaw the Public, and were only acted privately, we cannot fix their Date with ſo much Certainty as we can do that of the Comedy acted *extempore*.

The Theatre in *Spain* begun in a quite different manner: It is true, that neither the *Spaniards* nor any other Nation boaſted of acting *extempore*; but they may juſtly claim the Honour of renewing and eſtabliſhing the true Comedy. The Hiſtory of *Spain* furniſhes us with very ancient Accounts of their firſt Theatrical Entertainments, which were ſmall Farces of one Act, called *Entremeſſes* or *Jornadas*, which is the Name they now

now bear in *Spain*. Theſe Pieces conſiſted of very few Scenes, and were performed by very few Actors. The Action of the Piece turned upon ſome Subject that was ridiculous and common. All this was wrote down, and being filled with Touches of Wit and Satyre, made a very extravagant Medley, not unlike the Performances of the Latin *Mimes*, for both their Subjects were of the ſame Nature. Theſe *Entremeſſes* were exhibited and performed in Thoroughfares, and in the moſt public Places of the Towns, on occaſion of ſome ſacred or profane Feaſt, ſuch as the Dedication of a Church, the Marriage of a Sovereign Prince, or his Acceſſion to the Throne, or ſome ſuch Occaſion. The *French* did not, till a long time after, imitate the *Spaniards* in this. If we were to judge of this ſort of Performances by the modern *Entremeſſes*, which the beſt Dramatic Poets in *Spain* have furniſhed us with, we would have Reaſon to believe that the firſt of theſe were very weak and inſignificant Pieces; for ſuch of them as were wrote in the time of *Calderon* are very wretched Performances, and can pretend to no greater Share of Merit than that of being *Farces*, in the loweſt Senſe of the Word.

Theſe Diverſions, intended only for the Amuſement of the People, were ſucceeded

by Comedy, which was eſtabliſhed in the ſame manner as it was in *Greece*. It was exhibited almoſt without any Ornaments and Decorations, and in Places not at all ſuited to the Feaſts that occaſioned it. Tho' the *Spaniſh* Theatres are now under better Regulations, yet they ſtill keep the old Name of *Corrales* or *Court-yards*. But when People intend to honour them with a nobler and more ſplendid Name, they call them *Palios* or great Courts. The Theatres which are in the Palaces of Princes or great Men are not called *Corrales* (that being a Name too low for them) but *Coliſeos*.

It is evident that the *Spaniards* have inſenſibly introduced a better Sort of Comedy inſtead of theſe Farces: But it is impoſſible to fix the preciſe Time of this Change, which put their Stage into its preſent Condition. It is certain, however, that they can juſtly boaſt of being the firſt who carried Comedy to that Pitch of Perfection, at which we have for ſome Time paſt obſerved it; and they can date this Reeſtabliſhment from the middle of the xvth Century, whilſt the *Italians* can only date the Commencement of their regular Comedy, from the beginning of the xvith Century; and the *French* theirs, from about the End of the xviith, that is to ſay, from the Days of *Moliere*.

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D. Lope de Rueda and *Navaro*, who were Contemporaries, begun to reduce Comedy to three Acts, which were formerly divided into four: It was uſual with the People of thoſe Days to call what we term *Acts*, *Actos*; and the two Authors, juſt now cited, ſtile them *Jornadas*; which Practice has been follow'd by all the Authors who have hitherto had their Performances printed. But I judge it highly neceſſary to examine the Conſtruction and Contrivance of their Play-houſe, by which means we may get ſome Light with regard to the Antiquity of their Comedy.

The Theatres in *Spain* are erected in a Form quite peculiar to themſelves: They are almoſt ſquare, and have three Stories for the Accommodation of the Audience. There are only Boxes in the firſt of theſe; and theſe Boxes are not like thoſe of *France*, they being only divided by Rails. The Front Box, and which is immediately above the Door which leads to the Pit and the Theatre, is ſtiled the City-Box, becauſe it is always taken up by (what they call) *Regidores*, or Lieutenants of the Police. Below this Box, in the reſt of the Front, is erected a kind of Amphitheatre, which jutts out a little into the Pit, and is furniſhed with Seats. They call it *Cazuela*, and none but Women ſit in it. Below the *Cazuela*, and on

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the two Sides of the Door by which they enter into the Pit, are two dark Boxes called *Aloxeros*, in one of which, an *Alcade de Corte* (who is a Royal Judge) ſits, having all his Retinue before him in a ſmall Appartment which is in the Pit. This Magiſtrate, however, does not always ſit here, 'tis only when the Scene is embaraſſed by the Decorations; for at the ſimple Comedy, which they call *de Capay Spada*, he ſits in a Chair, on one of the Sides of the Theatre, with two or three of his Officers behind him.

Above the loweſt Boxes on the two Sides of the Hall is a ſecond Row conſiſting of a kind of Boxes, or little Chambers called *Banes*; in which thoſe Perſons who want to be concealed from public View, chuſe to ſit. On the ſame Line, and in all the front Appartments, is an empty Space (as large as the *Cazuela*) called the *Tertulia*, where the Monks, Prieſts, and other Perſons, whoſe Characters oblige them to a ſtrict Obſervance of the Laws of Decency, ſit. On the two Sides of the Pit, are Places allotted for the Men, who ſit in the ſame Manner as they were wont to do in the antient Amphitheatres. Theſe Places are called *Gradas*, and the People go up to them by ſmall wooden Steps. They are incloſed with a kind of Baluſtrade, and joined to two Rows of Seats which are upon the Stage. At the End of

theſe

theſe Steps, is another Place joined to the Theatre and as large as it. It is raiſed a little above the Pit, and is called *Los Tabouretes*, or *Media Lunetta*, and reſembles the Orcheſtrum of the *Italian* and *French* Theatres. In the *Patio*, or Pit fronting the Theatre, are Seats joined to the loweſt Steps of the two Amphitheatres we have mentioned. Formerly, the Amphitheatres had no Roof, as they now have, upon that Part of the Pit. So that the Spectators were often expoſed to Rain, and to the Inclemency of the Air ‡.

This Form of Theatres which in *Spain* differs ſo widely from the other Theatres of *Europe*, may be a Proof of their Antiquity; for 'tis natural to think, that if the Theatres of *Italy* had been erected before thoſe of *Spain*, the *Spaniards* in the Conſtruction of theirs would have copied from the *Italian* Model, as the other Nations of *Europe* have for the moſt Part done. For Inſtance, the Form of the Amphitheatres in *France*, which might, nevertheleſs be copied from the *Cazuela*, of the Theatres of *Madrid*; as the two Rows of Seats upon the *Spaniſh* Stage, may have alſo laid a Foundation for the Six erected on the *French* Theatre for the Accommodation of more Spectators.

‡ At preſent they have built at *Madrid* a very large and magnificent Theatre in the *Italian* Taſte, except retaining a few Parts of their ancient Form.

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The manner of paying, for ſeeing a *Spaniſh* Play, is the ſame with the *Italian*. They firſt pay for their Entrance into the Hall, *Quatro quartes*, which is equivalent to two Sols and a half *French* Money, and afterwards for a Seat, they pay the ſame Sum, or a little more, according to the Quality of the Seat. 'Tis uſual likewiſe in *Spain* to hire Boxes for a whole Year; but this Practice is chiefly uſed by Ladies of Fortune, who are on ſuch Occaſions, attended only by their own Relations, or their old Servants. But they now begin to ſhake off this Reſtaint, and in a great many Points, act with greater Freedom. If one inclines to take only a ſingle Seat in a Box, (which Men only do) he pays for it two *Reales de plata*, which mount to twenty Sols. The Tabouretes are let at the ſame Price, and all the reſt in proportion.

The Decorations were formerly very inconſiderable, conſiſting only of a wretched Curtain which concealed the Doors, at which the Actors came in and went out. This Piece of Decoration is not quite laid aſide, but is chiefly uſed in the Comedies, called *Capay Eſpada*.

The Habits uſed on the Stage were formerly very plain; but Luxury has now reached the Theatre, and the Actreſſes (eſpecially in the Opera) are dreſſed in a very ſplendid

did and magnificent Manner. Their Authors make Choice of their Subjects from Fables, ſo as Muſic may bear a great Share of the Entertainment; and then indeed the Decorations, the Shiftings of the Schenes, the Habits, and all the reſt of their Equipage are very ſumptuous and magnificent. But when any Piece is acted in the *Salon de Palacio*, in the *Coliſeo del Ritiro*, or in the Houſe of ſome Man of Figure or Quality, they endeavour to vie with the *Italian* Theatre in Grandeur, Pomp, and Magnificence.

It would be hard to tell the preciſe Number of Dramatic Poets produced by *Spain*; but among thoſe of the beſt Reputation we may juſtly reckon *Lopez de Vego*, *Calderon*, *Mureto*, *Solis*, *Salazar*, *Molina*, and ſome others. With regard to the Number of Dramatic Performances, the *Spaniards* are ſuperior to all other Nations; and without exaggerating, one may ſay, that there are more *Spaniſh* Comedies than there are of *French* and *Italian*, from their firſt Date to this very Day. If any one ſhould call in Queſtion what I ſay, he needs only examine, for his Satisfaction, the Works of ſome of the Poets of this Nation.

Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca alone has publiſhed nine Volumes of Comedies, and ſix Volumes of *Autos Sacramentales*, every one of

of which Volumes contains twelve Pieces, which in all amount to an hundred and eighty; and it is certain, that he wrote more which have never been printed. Tho' *Auguſtine Mureto* publiſhed only thirty ſix Pieces, he certainly wrote a great many more. *Fray Gabriel Thelles* compoſed a great Number of Pieces, tho' we have only five Volumes printed, every one of which contains twelve Comedies. It is plain by the ancient Regiſter, or Journals of the Theatres, that *Lopes de Vega Carpio* wrote more than one thouſand five hundred Pieces, which have all been acted; but now we can only find, and that too with Difficulty, twenty ſix Volumes of them, containing three hundred and twelve Comedies. If any one ſhould diſpute his Pieces which have not reached our Hands, yet he cannot controvert the 312 which have: This prodigious Number ſufficiently ſhews that the moſt fertile Genius of all the Dramatic Poets, cannot, or ought not to be compared to *Lopes de Vega*, at leaſt in Luxuriancy of Fancy, and Fruitfulneſs of Imagination.

Don Juan Peres de Montabalan has wrote thirty ſix Comedies; and twelve *Autos Sacramentales*: And among all the Authors who have wrote for the Theatres, there is ſcarcely one who has not been Author of twenty four Pieces, except *Antonio de Solis*, and

and *Don Auguſtine de Salazar*, who (tho' each of them has only wrote nine Pieces) are juſtly eſteemed amongſt the beſt Poets of their Age. We need not be ſurprized, that the Performances of theſe two Authors are ſo few compared with thoſe of their Contemporaries, if we conſider that *Solis* died very young, and *Salazar*, when he was little more than a Child. 'Tis reported that the former left a Piece unfiniſhed, entitled *Amor es Arte de Amar*, but nobody ever made an Attempt to finiſh it. It was upon Occaſion of *Salazar*'s Death, that *Calderon* expreſſed himſelf thus, *Emperaba par d'Onde el Acababa*, that is, he excelled all others in thoſe Pieces which received the laſt Touch from himſelf.

There are ſix hundred *Autos Sacramentales* printed, beſides an infinite Number which never appeared. Theſe *Autos Sacramentales* are ſacred Dramas, acted at certain Seaſons of the Year, but eſpecially at *Chriſtmas*. We have no Reaſon to think that they bear any Reſemblance to theſe Dramas, which are ſo numerous in *Italy*, and which repreſent the Myſteries of our *Saviour*'s Paſſion, or ſome remarkable Event in the Lives of the Martyrs or Holy Virgins. No, they are allegorical Performances, which treat indeed of the Myſteries of Religion, but in a very peculiar Manner. *Don Pedro Calderon* is eſteemed

eſteemed the beſt of all the Poets in this way, and 'tis univerſally agreed, that he is unrivalled.

The Form of theſe Dramas is always allegorical, as we have already obſerved; and the Memory, the Will, the Underſtanding, Life, Judaiſm, the Church, Idolatry, Apoſtacy, *&c.* are introduced as Perſonages. Nay, *Don Pedro Calderon* has made Perſonages of the five Senſes, but among theſe, there are very often Characters from Life, eſpecially of the Comic kind; as we have already obſerved, the whole Action of this ſort of Dramas turns upon the greateſt Myſteries of Religion, eſpecially the Euchariſt where the Action generally ends.

The *Autos Sacramental des las Plantes* of the ſame *Calderon*, appears to me a very ſingular Performance in this way: The Bramble, the Mulberry-tree, the Cedar, the Almond-tree, the Oak, the Olive-tree, the Spikenard, the Vine, and the Laurel, are the Actors. Two Angels appear upon the Theatre; and adreſſing theſe Plants, they tell them that one among them ought to produce a ſweet and admirable Fruit: They then invite them to a divine Combat for a Crown, which one of theſe Angels holds firſt in his Hand, and then hanging up at a Corner of the Theatre, endows them with the Faculty of Speech, and then retires. The Trees ſpeak,

and

and ſeem to be ſurprized at their Transformation. The *Cedar* appears upon the Stage with a Baton in his Hand in Form of a Croſs: The reſt of the Actors are repreſented as ſurprized at the Sight of him; none of them having ever ſeen that Tree before. The *Cedar* makes a long allegorical Diſcourſe upon the Creation of the World, the Formation of Man, and the Production of Animals and Vegetables: He tells them, that as the ſeveral Species of Animals, which inhabited in the Sea, the Air, and the Earth, had their reſpective Kings, ſo the Trees ought to have theirs. He adds, that he did not, upon account of ſuperior Merit, claim this Prerogative; but that he would be Judge which of them has the juſteſt Title to it. He then goes off the Stage.

The Plants which remain upon the Stage are not a little enraged, that a ſtrange and unknown Tree ſhould arrogate to itſelf the Right of judging in Matters belonging to them: They enumerate the ſeveral Properties and Qualities attributed to them by Mankind; and by theſe every one pretends to make good his Right, and carry the Point in his own Favour.

In the next Scene the *Cedar* propoſes to every Plant to give in a kind of Petition, in which his Title ſhould be proved; which is

accordingly done. Then the *Cedar* appears holding before him a Croſs, the Arms of which are twiſted round with the Leaves of *Cedar*, *Cypreſs*, and *Palms*. The Plants are divided into two Factions; ſome juſtify, and ſome condemn the Conduct of the *Cedar* in appointing himſelf their Judge. The *Bramble* is ready to burſt with Rage, and aſks the *Cedar*, who he is? The *Cedar* refuſing to tell him ſo much as his Name, the *Bramble* is more enraged, and ſays, that he alone is able to root out and deſtroy a Tree ſo inſolent, ſo tyrannical, and unknown in the Country. He then advances to the *Cedar* and takes hold of him. The *Cedar* ſcreams out, and complains that he tore his Body: Immediately upon this, Streams of Blood were ſeen to flow from the Croſs; and all the Plants groan at the diſmal Sight. The *Cedar* ſaid, he would ſprinkle all the Earth with that Blood; to receive which the *Spikenard* and the *Vine* came up to the Croſs. The *Cedar* then obſerving their Compaſſion and Humility, and holding the Croſs ſtill before him, addreſſed them in theſe Words:

Pues Humildes, pues Piadoſos
Lo dos recedib mi Cuerpo,
O mi Sangre, en lo dos Solo
Deſde oy mi Cuerpo, y mi Sangre
Sera divina teſoro, &c.

Which

Which is, *Since with Humility and Compaſſion you both receive my Body and my Blood; in you two alone ſhall my Body and Blood remain a divine Treaſure from this Day.* The *Bramble*, ſeeing himſelf beſmeared with the Blood, is filled with Deſpair; and obſerving that all the Plants fled at the Sight of him, he breaks forth into hideous Lamentations: Then the Croſs appears in the Air, and ſome of the Plants deſire the *Cedar* to pronounce, who deſerved the Crown. The *Cedar* declares that Humility gave the beſt Title to it; and accordingly decreed it to the *Spikenard* and the *Vine*. Then the Piece ends. In this manner end all the *Autos Sacramentales*, ſtill concluding with a Thought relating to the Myſtery of the Euchariſt.

Theſe Dramas are uſher'd in by a Prologue which they call *Sacramental*, and to which they give a particular Title that ſeems to have no manner of relation to the Myſtery of the Sacrament, which nevertheleſs is the chief Subject of the Piece. As for Example, *Loa Sacramental del Loco*, that is, the *ſacramental Prologue of the Fool.* At the Beginning of this Prologue the People in the Area cry, *Take Care of the Fool who has made his Eſcape. Let us run, let us run after him.* The Fool afterwards appears, deſiring thoſe who call'd after him not to make them-

ſelves uneaſy, ſince he is not now the Perſon he formerly was, and telling them that the Pleaſure of being Witneſs to the Feaſt had made him come forth, *&c.* Then in leſs than two hundred ſmall Verſes he makes an Enumeration of all the Miracles and Myſteries in the *Old* and *New Teſtament*. The Caſe is the ſame with the Sacramental Prologue of the *Peaſant*; as likewiſe with that of the *Doublemeaners*; the Titles of which promiſe quite the Reverſe of what is the Deſign of the Pieces.

Beſides the known Authors, there are a great many annoymous ones, who in their Title-pages aſſume no other Name than that of an *Ingegnio*, *Dos ou de tres Ingegnios*. A Bookſeller in *Madrid* has had the Curioſity to make a Collection of all the Theatrical Pieces of annoymous Authors, publiſhed under the Name of *Ingegnios*; and tho' he has not as yet been able to make up a complete Sett, yet he has got four Thouſand eight hundred. If we add to this the immenſe Number of Theatrical Pieces, printed with their Author's Names, we may eaſily diſcern that all the Nations in *Europe* cannot equal the Number of Plays in *Spain*. I know the Critics will object to me, that a great many of theſe Pieces do conſiſt but of one Intrigue founded upon the Point of Honour, which has occaſioned not only a great Reſemblance

ſemblance one to another, but even made Authors tranſcribe their own Works. But we are to conſider that this kind of Compoſition is accommodated and adapted to the prevailing Taſte of the Nation; that it is natural for an Author to conform himſelf, in Works of this kind, to the Turn and Humour of his Country; and that the ſame may be ſaid of the *Italians* and the *French*, who for a long time paſt have only choſe as the Subjects of their Drama, Love-Intrigues, differing very little from one another.

As this is the Caſe, we have no juſt Reaſon to reproach the *Spaniards* with having made Point of Honour the chief Subject of their Drama. We ought likewiſe to own, that it is not the only Subject their Dramatic Writers have touched upon, ſince we may learn from thoſe who have imitated them, what a peculiar Turn their Ideas have, and with what Eaſe they not only invent their Subjects, but likewiſe work up their Fables into a Conformity to the National Taſte; and notwithſtanding the great Number of their Comedies, there are very few that in their Plans and Sentiments are borrowed from Writers of other Nations. The *Spaniards*, on the contrary, have furniſhed Materials for all the Dramatic Poets in *Europe*.

From the Beginning of the *Italian* Comedy, down to the Middle of the ſeventeenth

Century, the *Italians*, both in Tragedy and Comedy, have made the *Greeks* and *Latins* their Patterns; but for the two hundred and thirty Years following, their Dramatic Performances were for the moſt Part only Tranſlations from *Spaniſh* Originals. The *French* may be ſaid to have done the ſame. In the Infancy of their Theatre, they begun by imitating the *Greeks* and *Latins*, but afterwards tranſlated from the *Spaniards*. Tho' in the Days of *Corneille* the *French* Tragedy appeared with a quite different Face from what it formerly had, yet they even then imitated the *Spaniards*; the *Cid* of *Peter Corneille* and the *Vinceſlaus* of *Rotrou* are ſufficient Proofs of this; and even in our own Time we ſee very beautiful Tragedies almoſt entirely taken from the *Spaniſh* Language. The *Ines de Caſtro* of Mr. *Houdart de la Motte* is a Piece ſo exquiſite, that it is ſufficient to convince us, that the greateſt Genius ought not to deſpiſe ſo rich a Mine, a Treaſure in which ſo many beautiful and precious Materials are hoarded up. And Experience convinces us, that a Man of Taſte may thence draw Ideas which not only pleaſe, but ſtrike with uncommon Force, provided he knows how to tell them properly.

It is not thro' Ignorance that the *Spaniards* have neglected to follow *Ariſtotle*'s Rules. *Don Lopez de Vega* tells us that *Don Lope*

de Rueda has obſerved them with great Severity in his Plays; there are alſo ſeveral other Comedies, and Tragi-Comedies in *Spain*, which their Poets rehearſe to their Readers, and boaſt that they are compoſed according to the exacteſt Rules of the Drama. *Vega* himſelf, in writing of the Dramatic Art, tells us, that if the *Spaniſh* Poets have not ſubjected themſelves to Rules, it is not ſo much to be imputed to their Ignorance, as the Neceſſity they are under to pleaſe the Taſte of the Nation, particularly the Ladies, who in *Spain*, as well as in other Countries, fix the State of the Stage and the Language. But notwithſtanding this Negligence, Men of Genius, in tranſlating the *Spaniſh* Plays into another Language, may eaſily reduce them to all the Exactneſs which is neceſſary. This we ſee has been done by the two *Corneilles*, by *Molliere*, and many others. Thus we may look upon the *Spaniſh* Theatre as an inexhauſtible Fund, from whence all other Nations may be ſupplied.

At *Madrid* there are at preſent three famous Dramatic Writers; viz. *Don Felles de Arebo*, *Don Bernerdo Joſeph de Reynoſo y Quiſiones*, and *Don Joſeph de Canizares*. The laſt of theſe has the moſt fertile Pen, and the greateſt Reputation: None of them have yet publiſhed any of their Pieces, becauſe it is not uſual to publiſh them one after an-

other, as is done in *France*; for there they wait until they have a complete Collection for the Theatre. If thoſe Authors alone are as exuberant in their Fancy as their Predeceſſors, they will leave more Pieces to Poſterity than all the *French* Authors their Cotemporaries.

The *Spaniards* obſerve great Order in their Theatrical Repreſentations: For however they may clap or laugh, there is never any Tumult to diſturb the Actors. Their Applauſes, like thoſe of the Ancients and the Modern *French*, conſiſt moſtly in clapping their Hands. If the Play is ill wrote, or ill acted, they wait to the End before they give their Judgment: If it happens to pleaſe, the whole Audience raiſe a confuſed Shout, and demand it again next Night, as is done in *Italy*, and particularly at *Venice:* And to prevent Diſorder, there is (as I have already obſerved) always an *Alcaide de Corte* preſent with his Guards.

As the *Spaniſh* Actors (who always ſeek after Truth in their Expreſſion) faithfully imitate Nature, they are no leſs careful to do ſo in their Action and Geſture, without departing from that Gravity which is peculiar to their Nation. This I am informed of by the Memoirs which I have received from them on that Subject, and which I can aſſure the Reader, are authentic. Tho' ſeveral *Spaniards*

niards acted in *Italy* in my Time, I muſt own that I could never thoroughly underſtand them: But having one Day met a *Spaniſh* Player, I aſked the Favour of him to repeat ſome Scenes to me; which he did in a manner that quite ſurprized me, and affected me ſo ſtrongly, that I ſhall never forget it. My Surprize was ſtill increaſed becauſe his Habit was very unfit for one that was going to make a noble Declamation; having no other Dreſs but a coarſe kind of Cloak, which he had wore in a Pilgrimage to *Rome*. As I was commending him for his moving Action, he aſſured me he was but one of the middling Actors of his Country, and named ſeveral others then living, of whom he gave me a ſurprizing Character. Tho' I am inclined to believe him, yet, leſt I ſhould be deceived, I ſhall be determined by thoſe who have ſeen and underſtand the *Spaniſh* Drama.

The *Spaniſh* Farces are more upon the *Italian* Taſte than thoſe of any other Nation. He that acts the principal Part is called *Gracioſo*, and very much reſembles the Dreſs and Character of our Harlequin. It is true that the *Gracioſo* is not very lucky in the Subjects of his Witticiſms; for on every Occaſion he ſwears by the Saints, of which the Poet affects to chuſe the moſt unuſual Names, in order to make his Wit more comical, if it can be called Wit. They who

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are curious to ſee more of this, may look into the *Spaniſh* Plays, which are full of it. Indeed I am not ſurprized, in the main, that the *Gracioſo* ſhould ſo nearly reſemble the Harlequin of the *Italian* Comedy. I ſuppoſe the *Spaniſh* Theatre to be an Age older than that of *Italy*: This the *Spaniards* themſelves pretend; but they cannot trace it back any further. However that may be, it cannot be more ancient than the *Italian Extempore* Comedy. Harlequin was introduced ſoon after the Decay of the Gentil Comedy, if it be true that it came directly from the *Centunculus* of the *Latins*, as I have endeavoured to prove in another * Place. The *Spaniards* in forming their Theatre followed no other Patterns but thoſe of *Greece*, *Italy*, or the *Extempore* Comedy of the *Italians*, which undoubtedly prevailed during ſeveral Ages afterward: Thus it is but natural to ſuppoſe that the *Spaniards* imitated thoſe; and it is for that Reaſon we find ſo great

* In my Hiſtory of the *Italian* Theatre printed at *Paris* 1728, Page 5, *&c.* the Reader may ſee that not only the Harlequin is a kind of Remnant of the *Latin Mimi*, and his Habit almoſt the ſame, but alſo that ſince the Decay of the Gentil Theatre, the Habit and Character of thoſe *Latin Mimi* in all their Parts have been continued in *Italy* down to our Times. To prove this we may conſult *Cicero*, *Apulecus*, *Diomed*, *Voſſius*, &c.

great a Reſemblance between the Farces of the two Nations.

The *Spaniſh* Pieces have commonly a kind of Bawds whom they call the *Capa y Eſpada:* Theſe are of the ſame kind with the *Dame Inviſible*, or the *Eſprit Folet* of the *French* Theatre, and with the *Maiſon a deux portes*, a Comedy acted *extempore* on the *Italian* Theatre, all taken from *Calderon*. The *Spaniſh* Theatre is full of Pieces of this kind, from whence Authors of all other Nations may draw numberleſs Copies. Thoſe which are of a more elevated kind, either by the Quality of the Perſons which are introduced, or the Greatneſs of the Plot and the Incidents, may ſerve as a Model for Tragi-Comedy and Tragedy; and in copying after, or imitating theſe, the *Italians* and *French* have made no ſmall Advantage.

From all that has been ſaid we may conclude, that tho' the *Spaniſh* Theatre is deſtitute of Rules, yet if we conſider the great Beauty of their Thoughts, and the prodigious Number and Variety of Dramatic Subjects peculiar to them, that their Stage has been, and is the great Source of Poetry, and the grand Model for all the Stages in *Europe*.

THE

THE FRENCH THEATRE.

THE Original of the *French* Theatre is not ſo obſcure as thoſe of *Italy* and *Spain*; for the Traces which remain of it afford us a more certain Knowledge of its Riſe, than the *Spaniards* or *Italians* have been able to preſerve of theirs; and ſeveral *French* Authors have fixed theſe Epochas, and handed them down to us. It is true we ſometimes meet with ſome Anachroniſms, but they are not of ſo great Conſequence as to alter the Truth of Facts; and whatever Difference we may meet with in Point of *Time*, or even *Facts*, yet we are ſtill able to account for the true Original State of the *French* Theatre. Ever ſince the Year 1500 we meet with *French* Authors who have written

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in the Dramatic Way; and the Diſſertations on that Subject have never been diſcontinued for an Age together. As I own myſelf not very well qualified to give the *complete* Hiſtory of this Theatre, I ſhall content myſelf with giving the Reader a Hint of what they have copied from the *Romans*, and for that Purpoſe go as far back in my Reſearches as I am able.

After I had ended this Treatiſe in 1734, a Hiſtory of the *French* Theatre appeared: And as that new Work obliged me to abridge mine, the Reader I hope will pardon me to take this Opportunity of publiſhing my Remarks and Obſervations thereon.

The Author of that Hiſtory pretends that Comedy was re-eſtabliſhed in *France* by the *Troubadours* about the twelfth Age; but I don't know on what he founds his Opinion: All that he ſays upon that Head only ſhews us the different Changes which Comedies ſuffered before it was formed into a Theatrical Repreſentation. All the Works of the *Troubadours* which he mentions, and which indeed don't deſerve the Name of Comedies, only ſerved to give the *French* Nation gradual and more perfect Ideas of it. With regard to its Origin, I believe we may well raiſe it five hundred Years higher than the Epocha given it by this new Hiſtory.

In ſpeaking of the *Troubadours*, that Author

thor aſſerts that they were the Inventors of Comedies in *Provence*, and that among them there were ſome who were called Comics, whom he would have us believe were Comedians. It would ſeem that he has miſunderſtood the Meaning of the Word *Comic*, which ſignifies only a *Fool* or *Buffoon*. To prove this I need only tranſcribe that very Paſſage of *Noſtradamus* quoted by that Author with regard to *Nouez*, who died *Anno* 1220. "That Poet (ſays *Noſtradamus*) was "a *good Comic*, and went about among the "Houſes of the Nobility ſinging, dancing, "and making Geſtures; by which, and by "the other Geſtures proper to a true *Comic*, "he gained an immenſe Treaſure." This is an exact Deſcription of a Buffoon: And if in thoſe Days the Buffoons met with greater Eſteem than was due to that Character, it was becauſe they added to it the Merit of making Verſes, which they rehearſed with ſome Degree of Art.

I believe he is no leſs miſtaken when he ſays, that in the twelfth Century they had Comedies and Tragedies in *Provence*, becauſe at that Time they had Pieces of Poetry which went under that Name: But how can he give the Name of Comedy to thoſe Poems which by his own Confeſſion (Page 13) *reſembled rather Dialogues than Comedies?* To which he afterwards adds, that by *the Motion*

Motion of the Body and Change of the Voice, *Noſtradamus* intends to deſcribe the Art which *Nouez* had of reciting his Dialogues alone, ſpeaking either with a Man's or Woman's Voice, or ſhifting the Place, Geſture, or Air of his Countenance, almoſt like *Soſia* in the Soliloquy of the Play of *Amphytrion*: Indeed thoſe Qualities may be well taken for thoſe of a *Comic*, *i. e.* a Droll, but not that of a Comedian.

The *Trouvers*, or *Troubadours*, who compoſed thoſe different kinds of Poems, called them *Songs*, *Sonnets*, *Sounds*, *Verſes*, *Words*, *Lays*, *Satyrs*, *Paſtorals*, *Comedies*, &c. Now thoſe two laſt Titles can only belong properly to Theatrical Pieces; and it is preſumable that theſe above-mentioned were only Poems, or rather Dialogues, which (like ſome others of that kind) had their Names from their Subject: Thus, for Example, thoſe which treated of Shepherds and rural Pleaſures, were called Paſtorals; thoſe in Verſe full of Comical or Droll Lines, tho' rehearſed only by one Perſon, were called Comedies. Perhaps thoſe Authors called their Poems Comedies for the ſame Reaſon that *Dante* gave that Name to his Poem, (Comedy ſignifying Dialogue) tho' we don't look upon it as a Dramatic Poem. And even in the Epic, becauſe the fourth Book of the *Æneid* is almoſt entirely Dramatic, muſt we for that Reaſon

call

call it a Tragedy? Perhaps the *Provencois* had no other Reaſon to call their Comical Dialogues by the Name of Comedy.

I think *Paſſarol*'s five Poems ought not to be admitted among the Number of Tragedies: For properly ſpeaking, they were no more than a Collection of Tragic Verſes, in which he introduced ſome Perſon who rehearſed, declaimed, imprecated, or diſcourſed with another, without the Form of Repreſentation, and only by one Actor, who it is ſaid varied his Voice and Geſture. The Plans of thoſe pretended Tragedies mentioned by the Author of the Hiſtory of the Theatres, are rather thoſe of Hiſtorical Facts, ſuch as that of *Joan* Queen of *Naples* having four Huſbands, taken Word for Word from *Mezeray* and *Brantome*; and it is very probable that *Paſſarol* compoſed his Satyrical Verſes on thoſe Facts, and afterwards named them Tragedies, becauſe according to him the Subjects were tragical; and thus, as I have already obſerved, all the *Provencal* Poems took their Names from the Subject, as is the Cuſtom of all other Countries at this Day.

In order to prove what I have ſaid, I believe I may ſafely affirm that no Nation in *Europe* can fix the Date of their Theatrical Performances with any Certainty. And tho' St. *Thomas Aquinas*, who lived in the Beginning of the twelfth Century, doubted if

Comedy

Comedy might be acted without committing Sin, we muſt not think that he meant written Comedy; for in his Time, and perhaps for ſeveral Ages after him, *Extempore* Comedy prevailed in *Italy*. The *Spaniards* indeed pretend that their Theatre is much older than that of *Italy* or *France*; but I have already ſhewn that they have no ſure Ground for that Aſſertion. In Hiſtory I think we ought to bring *certain* Proof, and not conjecture for what is advanced, leſt we ſhould impoſe upon thoſe who without duly weighing Facts, take them upon the Credit of the Hiſtorian; now of all the Parts of Literature, we are moſt at a Loſs for the Hiſtory of Theatres, and conſequently Authors may more eaſily impoſe upon the Public on that Subject.

After all thoſe Reflections, it muſt be obſerved, that from the Eſtabliſhment of the *Troubadours* until the Year 1384, our Author brings no Proof that the *French* had either Theatres or Plays. What he has hitherto called *Provencal* Comedies, are only the Rehearſals of Songs, or Dialogues, either Comical, Tragical, or Satyrical; and tho' rehearſed by one Perſon in a Chamber, Court, or any other Place, they cannot be named Comedy, *i. e.* a Piece deſigned for a Theatre.

The Beginning of the *French* Theatre cannot therefore be fixed before the Year 1398, at which Time the Myſtery of the

Paſſion was repreſented at St. *Maur*. By our Author's inſerting the Order of the *Provoſt* of *Paris* on that Subject, he endeavours to prove that the Repreſentation of the Myſtery was begun long before the Year 1398, and indeed I am of his Opinion; but I cannot agree with him that thoſe ſacred Repreſentations that uſed to be made by Clergymen or Laics in Church Porches, or even in Churches, can aſcertain the Date of the *French* Theatre, which ought to begin from the Confraternity of the Paſſion.

By a Quotation which our Author has taken from the eleventh Book of the Hiſtory of the City of *Paris*, Page 523, he ſays, that *Anno* 1313 *Philip* the fair gave a magnificent Feaſt, to which he invited the King of *England*; and among the other Diverſions, the People *repreſented divers Shews, ſometimes the Joys of the Bleſſed in Heaven, and ſometimes the Puniſhments of the Damned.* The Author ſays, that theſe Shews were Repreſentations recited by way of Dialogue. This I am willing to believe for once, and am only ſorry that there is not one Pattern remaining of thoſe Dialogues. In the Repreſentation of Hell what Crying, Howling, and Lamentation ſhould we hear: On the contrary in Paradice we ſhould behold nothing but Joy and Adoration. In fine, I muſt beg Leave to tell this Author that I differ from him.

In

In my Opinion all that was nothing but Repreſentations in Figures, void of Dialogue of any kind. As that Feaſt was made only for the Kings of *France* and *England*, is it likely that theſe two great Kings, with their numerous Attendants, would ſtand an Hour and an Half in the Street to ſee thoſe Repreſentations? No, certainly; for I believe they only looked at them as they paſſed, or at moſt, ſtopped to hear an Angel or Devil rehearſe ſome Lines, till they could have a ſmall Notion of the Entertainment. Theſe figurative Repreſentations will not appear ſo ſtrange after reading the following Examples. In the Year 1690 I was in the City of *Genoa* on *Corpus Chriſti* Day: There they had ſeveral Theatres erected in the Corners of the Streets through which the Proceſſion of the Holy Sacrament was to paſs. On each of theſe was repreſented in living Figures a Myſtery taken from the *Old* or *New Teſtament*. The moſt remarkable of theſe was that which had been erected without the Gate by the Fiſhers of the Town: The Decoration repreſented the Sea with the Shore at a Diſtance: There appeared Jeſus Chriſt, as he is deſcribed by the Evangeliſts when he ordered his Apoſtles St. *Peter*, St. *John*, &c. to throw their Nets into the Sea; and when they anſwered that they had been toiling all Night to no Purpoſe, Chriſt com-

manded them to let fall their Nets on the other Side of the Veſſel: All this was performed by Action and Geſture without Speech. The Actors choſe to delay drawing the Net till the Sacrament was paſſing by the Stage; then they took them up, and found them full of a great Number of the moſt delicious and rare Fiſhes, which had been catched ſeveral Days before, and kept alive in Water for that Purpoſe. In the City of *Naples*, at the Feaſt of the Holy Sacrament, they alſo exhibit Shows of this kind, *viz.* Our Saviour on the Croſs on Mount *Calvary* accompanied with the bleſſed Virgin, *Mary Magdalen*, the other *Mary*, and all the reſt of that Myſtery. To do that with the greater Propriety, they make Choice of ſuch Women and young Girls as can beſt repreſent the Action, and who have Habits proper for the ſeveral Perſonages. In moſt of the Cities of *Flanders*, on certain Feſtivals they have Chariots carrying Stages through the Streets; on ſome of them they have Gardens and Pyramids: On theſe Theatres they have Actors who perform all in dumb Shew. The Subject is commonly taken from the *Old* or *New Teſtament*, or allegorical Objects of Piety. Theſe Feaſts they call *Carmeſſes*.

I was aſſured by a Gentleman of that Country, that on *Chriſtmas-Day* he had ſeen

a Toilet ſet where the Proceſſion of the Sacrament was to ſtop firſt: Before it was placed a fine Lady adorned with Jewels and Precious-ſtones; ſhe ſat adjuſting her Dreſs, and putting on her Patches until the Hoſt reſted: After that, ſhe roſe up all of a ſudden, puſhed away the Toilet, and kneeled down before the Sacrament. When it was taken up again, ſhe followed it, beating her Breaſt until the ſecond Reſt, where ſhe alſo fell down upon her Knees with great Compunction, ſhewing all the Signs of true Repentance; ſhe next pulled off all her Jewels and Dreſs, and remained in the Habit of a Penitent. In that Condition ſhe followed the Proceſſion, fetching heavy Sighs and Groans, and ſhedding Tears in ſuch a manner as drew them alſo from all thoſe who ſaw her. Is not this one Action followed through all its Forms?

In an Electoral City of *Germany* they commonly erect a Theatre in the Cathedral Church on one of the Days of the holy Week, repreſenting the Garden of Olives, where Chriſt after returning from Prayer found his Diſciples aſleep. All this is done by living Perſons: And he that repreſents Chriſt, goes three times and awakes the Apoſtles, and as often returns to Prayer: In a word, we may there ſee a *complete* Image of what happened in the Garden of Olives.

All this Action is performed in Dumb Shew and Pantomime. After these Examples, I think I had Reason to affirm, that the Representation of Heaven and Hell, which I have mentioned, was but figured Representations, and executed in the same manner with those I have been relating.

If we believe the Author of this History, the first Comedies that were acted in *France* were those of *Provence*, and begun *Anno* 1198; if (I say) we believe him, how is it possible that 200 Years afterwards, when the Mysteries of the Passion were first represented at *St. Maur*, there should be so much Simplicity and Ignorance in those Theatrical Representations? Indeed it is highly improbable, as I have already observed, that at the Distance of two Ages after the Representation of the * *Provencal* Comedy, the same Ignorance should continue so long without the least Improvement either in *Provence* or *Paris*. For surely if it were true that the *Troubadours* had acted Comedy, and *Passarol* Tragedy, we should not have

* In the Representation of the *Mysteries*, the Theatre represented Paradice, Hell, Heaven, and Earth all at once; and tho' the Action varied, there was no Change of the Decorations. After an Actor had performed his Part he did not go off the Stage, but retired to a Corner of it, and sat there in full View of all the Spectators.

have been ſo much at a Loſs concerning the Origin of the *French* Theatre.

I would not however infer from thence that Dramatic Poems began to appear in *France* only in that Year wherein the Myſteries of the Paſſion were exhibited at *St. Maur*; on the contrary I am perſuaded, that thoſe Myſteries, ſuch as they were then repreſented, void of all kind of *Order* or Principle in the Compoſition, could not be the firſt which were repreſented at *Paris*. They muſt at leaſt for ſome time before have repreſented either ſacred or prophane Plays in particular Places, Croſs-ways, *&c.* but thoſe Actions (if we conſider their Nature) can never be ſufficient to eſtabliſh the Epocha of the *French* Theatre. However that may be, the Myſteries repreſented at *St. Maur* (I repeat the Aſſertion) will be found to be the firſt Exhibition of that kind that appeared in *France*. I know no Author who gives us the leaſt Hint of any older Theatre, and every other Method we ſhall uſe to aſcertain it, muſt be vain, ill-founded, and conjectural.

With regard to the Origin of Comedy in *France*, I think we may believe their Hiſtorians, who tell us, that ſeveral Writers erected Theatres whereon they acted Pieces of their own. We have alſo Authorities which prove, that in the Reign of *Charles* the Great, the Councils of *Mayence*, *Tours*, *Rheims* and

Chalons, prohibited the Clergy from aſſiſting at † Farce-Plays, and the King ratified the Order of the Council by an Edict which was publiſhed in the Year 813. Hence we know that the Comedy which had been diſuſed among the *Romans*, had been renewed in *France* and *Italy* by Strollers and Farce-Players, who acted in the Streets and other public Places. We ſee that to thoſe Shows which by an Edict of *Charles* the Great were declared ‡ obſcene and infamous, ſucceeded the *Troubadours*, *Jongleurs*, and others who rehearſed, or rather ſung Scraps of Hiſtory, Gallantry, and Satyr: And after thoſe *Troubadours* had fallen into Contempt, and were even baniſhed the Court of ‖ *Philip Auguſtus*, they found Means to eſtabliſh themſelves again in that very Reign, and obtained Apartments in one particular Street of the City, which from them was called *La Rue de Jongleurs*, now *Menetriers*. From that Time they only were paid at Feaſts and Aſſemblies. But we learn by two Orders of the Provoſt of *Paris*, from the Year 1341 to 1395, that they were prohibited from ſpeaking,

† The Farce Players were even then held to be infamous Perſons, and none were allowed to bring them before a Court of Juſtice. See *Marre*'s Treatiſe of Policy, Vol. I. Page 433, *&c.*

‡ *Hiſtrionum turpium & obſcenorum inſolentias jocorum, &c.*

‖ *Rigor de Geſt.* Philip. *Aug.*

ſpeaking, ſinging, or acting in public Places, or otherwiſe, any thing that might give Scandal or Offence. Not content with thoſe Reſtrictions, they changed their Manner of Action, and applied themſelves to exhibit ſurprizing Poſtures and dangerous Combats with naked Swords, which gave Occaſion to their being called *Battaleurs*, or Prize-fighters, a Name they have retained ever ſince.

If the Progreſs of thoſe Farce-players had not been obſtructed by Orders of the Councils, and the Edicts of the King which I have mentioned, perhaps the *French* had continued to encourage them. We may even venture to ſay, that the ſuppreſſing of thoſe Farce-players gave Riſe to the Buffoonries of the *Troubadours*, who afterwards degenerated into Farce-players no leſs ſcandalous than the firſt, and who were alſo ſuppreſſed under the Reign of *Philip* the Auguſt, as I have before obſerved. From theſe two Epochas ſo remarkable, it is probable that the firſt Farce-players, in the Time of *Charlemagne*, were the Remainder of the *Roman Mimi*, who acted in the Streets and public Places as they do now in *Italy*; and there is good Reaſon to believe that by this Progreſs they would have been led by Degrees to build Theatres, if they had been ſuffered to act without Interruption, as is done in *Italy*.

About the Year 1370, in the Reign of *Charles*

Charles V, we may eaſily obſerve the Origin of Tragic Declamation in thoſe long Repetitions of heroic Verſes which were often taken from the Myſteries of Religion, with a kind of Apoſtrophe to the Prince to whom they were dedicated, which at times they called the § *Royal Song*. Hence proceeded thoſe myſterious Dialogues which perhaps were acted in particular Places and without any Ornament, and were firſt repreſented on a Theatre in the Village of *St. Maur*, but were prohibited by the Provoſt of *Paris* by an Order dated the 3d of *June*, whereby he *forbids all the Inhabitants*, &c. *to act or repreſent any Play by Perſons, either the Lives of the Saints or otherwiſe, without Leave from the King, on Pain of*, &c. *

The Actors in thoſe Repreſentations formed a Part of the Royal Houſhold, and in order to make themſelves more agreeable to the Public, erected their Society into a Fraternity by the Name of *The Actors of our Saviour's Paſſion*. *Charles* VI. went to ſee thoſe Shows, and was ſo well pleaſed with them, that he granted the Actors Letters-patent dated the 4th of *December* 1402, which are printed at length in Mr. *De Marre*'s Treatiſe of Policy, Page 437. They alſo

§ See *Paſquier*, B. 7. of the Memoirs of *France*. Chap. V.

* Treatiſe of Policy by *Marre*, T. I.

alſo built the Theatre of the Hoſpital of the Holy Trinity, on which, during the Space of almoſt one hundred and fifty Years, they acted the Myſteries, or other Pieces of Piety and Morality under the common Title of *Moralities.* In the Year 1518 *Francis* I. confirmed all the Privileges of the Fraternity by his Letters-Patents, dated in the Month of *January* that Year.

At laſt the People, tired with theſe ſerious Repreſentations, forced the Fraternity to join prophane and burleſque Farces, which pleaſed them ſo much that they ran in Crowds to ſee them acted. But this Mixture of Morality and Buffoonry diſpleaſed the better Sort, who began to reflect that thoſe devout Subjects, which the Simplicity of diſtant Times had brought upon the Stage, were rather a Profanation of the principal Myſteries of Religion than Shews, and that they ought no longer to be tolerated. About that Time an Epidemical Diſeaſe prevailed in *Paris*, which obliged the Parliament to augment the Number of Hoſpitals, and to order by an *Arret*, dated the 30th of *July* 1347, in the Reign of *Henry* II. that the Houſe of the Trinity ſhould from henceforth be only uſed as an Hoſpital, which obliged the Fraternity to demoliſh their Theatre. But as they were then grown rich, they purchaſed the Scite of the Duke of

of *Burgundy*'s old Houſe, and there built a new Theatre. That Eſtabliſhment was confirmed by an Arret of Parliament dated the 19th of *November* 1548, which permitted them to act, *but always on this Condition*, (theſe are the Words of the Act) *that they ſhall meddle with none but prophane Subjects, ſuch as are lawful and honeſt, and not to repreſent any ſacred Myſteries*. And by confirming all their Privileges to them, all others are prohibited to act in the City or Suburbs, except in the Name, and for Account of the Fraternity, &c. This Privilege was further confirmed by Letters-patent from *Henry* II. in the Month of *November* 1559, and of *Charles* IX, 1563. Thus the Fraternity remained in peaceable Poſſeſſion of their Theatre; and in order to ſhew that they were the ſole Proprietors, they had their Coat of Arms cut on Stone (*viz.* a Scutcheon ſupported by two Angels, on which was repreſented a Croſs and other Inſtruments of the Paſſion) fixed in the Front of the Houſe towards the *French* Street. This was the ancient Device of the Fraternity, who, now that their new Theatre was finiſhed, and that they were prohibited from acting divine Myſteries or the Lives of the Saints, acted only prophane Pieces. They who are of another Opinion are miſtaken: The Stone with the Coat of Arms which I have mentioned, being only an Inſcription, can

can never be a ſufficient Foundation for their Aſſertion. All the Meaning of it was to ſhew that they were ſole Maſters and Proprietors of the Privileges of acting, or cauſing to be acted either prophane Comedies or Tragedies within the City of *Paris:* And all the moral Pieces that have been acted ſince, except by the Fraternity, have only been in private Houſes, or upon Scaffolds.

In Conſequence of the Order of Parliament in 1548, and the Letters-patents of *Henry* II. and *Charles* IX. confirming that Privilege, they continued for a long time to act upon their new Stage under the Name and Authority of the *Fraternity of the Paſſion.* I ſay under their Name and their Authority: For after the Opening of that Theatre, the Fraternity did not act *all* the Plays that were exhibited upon the Stage. They thought it was below the Dignity of their Name to mount the Stage only to act prophane Comedies, and immediately gave a Leaſe of their Houſe and Theatre to a Company of Comedians who were formed into a Body for that Purpoſe, reſerving only two Rooms to themſelves, in which they acted as long as their Privilege laſted.

We have neither the Names or Characters of thoſe Pieces which were acted at the Opening of this Theatre, and they only quote the old Farce written by *Pathelin,*

acted

acted in the Reign of *Henry* II. The Reaſon given by the Writers of this Age for not tranſmitting them to Poſterity, is, that the Pieces were ſo worthleſs, and the Authors ſo mean, that they were not worth recording. They only mention one *M. Jodelle* who wrote the firſt Tragedy after the Opening of the *Burgundian* Theatre.

Here we may obſerve that the *French* have copied the *Italians* in one Miſtake, *viz.* they have always reckoned *Jodelle* the firſt Tragic Writer, tho' he was not; for there were ſeveral before him, as *The Deſtruction of Troy the Great*, printed at *Lyons* in 1485. *The Iphegenia of Euripides* by *T. J.* printed in 1550. *The Hecuba of Euripides* by *Boucherella*, and another by *John Antoine Baif*, one in the Year 1537, the other in 1550; and the *Electra*, or *Revenge of Agamemnon*, tranſlated literally from *Sophocles* by *Lazarus de Baif*, Maſter of the Requeſts, and *F. Anthony Baif*, printed in 1537. But as thoſe Tragedies were only Tranſlations from the *Greek*, and *Jodelle* wrote two, *viz. Cleopatra* and *Dido*, which were neither Tranſlations nor Imitations of the Ancients, there is ſome Reaſon to allow him the firſt Place among the Tragic-Writers, and to fix the Epoche of Tragedy from his Works. Perhaps it may be ſuſpected that *Jodelle* imitated the *Italian* Tragedies of *Cleopatra* and

and *Dido*, written and printed long before he wrote, while the *Italian* Stage flouriſhed: But as I examined and compared them together, I can aſſure the Reader they are very different. Not but that there were many Tranſlations from *Italian* Plays in thoſe Days, as we may learn from *Du Verdier*'s *French Bibliotheque*, who in ſpeaking of the Comedy of that Time, has the following Words: "A very elegant Comedy, "in which are contained the Loves of "*Eroſtratus* the Son of *Phelogonus* of *Catania*, and of *Polymneſta*, the Daughter of "*Damon*, taken from the *Italian* and put "into *French* Rhyme. Printed at *Paris* by "*Herom Marnef* in 1545, the Author uncertain."

This Paſſage of *Du Verdier* naturally leads us to make one Obſervation which is mentioned by the greateſt Part of his Contemporaries, concerning the Eſtabliſhment of Comedy in *France*. They pretend that as ſoon as the *Burgundian* Theatre was opened, and for ſeveral Years after, no Plays were acted worthy of Notice: And of all the Pieces that were repreſented in *France* in thoſe Days, they have only mentioned a Farce written by *Pathelin*, the *Eugene* of *Jodelle*, the *Taillebras*, imitated from the *Miles Glorioſus* of *Plautus*, and the *Eunuch* of *Terence* by *M. Baif* in the Year 1567; but

but at the ſame time they obſerve that all the Plays before theſe were only ſorry Farces or Buffoonries. But according to *Du Verdier*, the Tranſlation of that *Italian* Comedy which he commends ſo much appeared in 1545, and conſequently before the Opening of the *Burgundian* Theatre, together with the *Andrian* of *Bonaventure de Periers*, which appeared in 1537. Thus we may reaſonably conclude, that while the *Moralities* and Myſteries of the Trinity were repreſented upon the Theatre, Tragedies and prophane Comedies were alſo acted at *Paris*; and if that was not done publickly and on the Theatre, the Fraternity had obtained that Liberty by the Letters-patent with all other kinds of Repreſentation.

As ſoon as the *Burgundian* Theatre was finiſhed, the Fraternity of the Paſſion let it to ſome Players, who (according to the Hiſtorian) immediately formed themſelves into a Company. But if at that Time they had no Actors at *Paris* who had been bred to the Theatre, how could the Company of Comedians be formed immediately? For tho' that be none of the moſt difficult Profeſſions, yet it requires Time and Application to be Maſter of it. We may therefore conclude, that tho' Comedy was acted in ſeveral Places of *Paris*, there were alſo Comical and Tragical

gical Pieces invented or imitated long before the Eſtabliſhment of the *Burgundian* Theatre.

Nay, it is certain that the *Bazoch*, *i. e.* the Clerks of the Attorneys of Parliament acted Comedies long before this Eſtabliſhment: And we have all the Reaſon in the World to believe that they acted in Public on Scaffolds, or elſe on Theatres erected in private Houſes. By a Petition of *Marot*, to the King for the *Bazoch*, we learn that his Majeſty ſometimes was preſent at thoſe Repreſentations. The Pieces which were acted by the *Bazoch* were commonly Satyrical, and *Lewis* XII. was the Subject of ſome of theſe. But he laught at them, and told the Fraternity, that if from henceforth they endeavoured to break their Jokes upon any Perſon that belonged to him, he would cauſe them all to be hang'd.

The Fraternity of the Paſſion were not therefore the only Theatrical Actors: And the Myſteries which from their firſt Inſtitution had been repreſented in Churches, in the *Flemiſh* Palace, on Highways, public Places, and croſs Streets of the City, at Feaſts, and public Rejoicings, conſequently muſt have employed ſeveral Perſons in the Art of Acting. After this, it is eaſy to imagine that the Fraternity would, without much Difficulty, ſoon find a Band of Comedians to take

a Leaſe of their Theatre, in order to act profane Pieces.

From all that has been ſaid on this Head, I think we may venture to affirm, that the Author of the * Theatrical Library has not ſufficiently examined what he has advanced on this Subject. In his Remark, under the Letter *A*, on the *Andrian*, he ſays, "It was "the firſt Tranſlation from *Terence*, that had "appeared upon the *French* Theatre, becauſe "the *Eunuch*, which was tranſlated by *M.* "*Baif* in the Reign of *Charles* IX, was not "acted, there being then no Comedians at "*Paris*." This he repeats again under the Article of the *Eunuch*, without remembering that in the Catalogue of Additions and Corrections at the End of the Book, he ſays, "That to the *Andrian* we muſt add the "*Bonaventure* of *M. Periers*, *Anno* 1537." Therefore the *Andrian* which appeared in 1704, was not the firſt *French* Tranſlation from *Terence*. The ſame may alſo be ſaid of the *Eunuch* tranſlated by *Baif* about the Year 1560.

Charles IX. who began his Reign about that Time, found the *Burgundian* Theatre ſettled and furniſhed with a Company of Comedians; for it was opened *Anno* 1548 or 49, the 2d of the Reign of *Henry* II. There muſt therefore be ſome other Reaſon which hindered the *Eunuch* of *M. Baif* from

* Printed at *Paris*, *Anno* 1733.

from being repreſented; and the moſt probable one is, that when the Myſteries were repreſented upon the Theatre of the Trinity, and before Plays were acted at the Palace of *Burgundy*, they played Tranſlations from the *Claſſics* upon private Stages only; for it is agreed that the *French* Stage was then very lame and poor, tho' afterwards it came to make a conſiderable Figure. A celebrated *Italian* Writer tells us a Story of the *French* Theatre, which is not to be met with in any other Author: I mean *Girolamo Ruſcelli*, who in his Collection of the beſt *Italian* Plays, printed in 1554 with Notes at the End, ſpeaking of *Caſſandra*, a Comedy written by *Bibiena*, ſays, "That in his Time they had a kind "of dumb Farces in *France*, in which the "Actors, without ſpeaking one Word, "were ſurprizingly underſtood by their "Geſtures." He adds, "that the Action "was ſo agreeable, and ſo taking with the "Spectators, that he was much pleaſed with "it. I am ſurprized (ſays he) that this "Method has never been brought into "*Italy*."

So candid a Relation from a Stranger, who tells us he ſaw thoſe Farces, is of unqueſtionable Authority; and I know not why no *French* Writer (at leaſt that I have ever ſeen) has thought fit to give us the leaſt Information concerning theſe Farces. From

the Deſcription of *Ruſcelli*, theſe Pantomimes muſt have been an excellent Show, and a true Imitation of the Mimes of the Ancients. Admitting this Fact as certain, how comes it to paſs that an Art, in which none of the Moderns have made any great Progreſs, yet was perfectly well known in *France* in thoſe Days, ſhould be ſo much loſt as that the ſmalleſt Traces of it are not remaining? We muſt not imagine that the Farces, which about twenty four Years ago were acted at *Paris* by Labels, are of that kind: For as I have been twenty Years in *France*, and have once ſeen a Farce performed by Labels, I am thereby enabled to judge of the Difference.

Theſe Farces which were acted with Labels are a very pretty Invention of their kind: Every one knows that the Actors appear upon the Stage without ſpeaking; That as ſoon as they appear, the Labels fall down ſucceſſively from the Ceiling upon their Heads; theſe are filled with Couplets of Songs written in large Characters, the Tunes of which are played by Muſic, and the Words read and ſung by the Pit. The Actors, during that Time, are making Geſtures agreeable to the Meaning of the Words, but in thoſe there is very little Diverſion or Pleaſure: All the Pleaſure conſiſts in the odd Cuſtom of making the Dialogues of the Actors to be ſung by the Spectators. That is indeed

indeed quite a modern Invention, and yet was not the Effect of Choice, but Neceſſity. As the King's Company of Comedians and the Opera were poſſeſſed of very extenſive Privileges, they would not allow the Companies of the two Fairs of *St. Lawrence* and *St. German* to act either by Singing or Speaking. Theſe Strollers invented the Labels in order to keep up their Theatre, and at firſt drew up a great Number of People to be Spectators, which was a great Loſs to the privileged Theatres. There is therefore no Reaſon to believe that thoſe Farces which were acted with Labels, were taken from the dumb Farces above-mentioned, much leſs that they were any thing like the pantomime Dances that were in Uſe in *England* and *France* about twelve Years ago; for *Ruſcelli* informs us, that theſe Farces paſſed in dumb Shew; and if this Action had been carried on by the Aſſiſtance of Dancing and Muſic, (which bear ſome Analogy to Language) our *Italian* Author would not have neglected to acquaint us with this Circumſtance, which I believe he himſelf would not have been ſo much ſurprized at. And 'tis ſtranger ſtill, during an hundred and fifty Years there was nothing preſerved in *Paris* which could ſo much as furniſh us with the faintеſt Ideas of theſe Pantomimes mentioned by *Ruſcelli*.

Theſe Shows, which were exhibited at

Paris even about the Middle of the ſixteenth Century, would induce me to think that they were the Remains of the before-mentioned Repreſentations of the *Pains of the Damned, and the Glory of the Bleſſed*, exhibited in the Year 1313 under the Reign of *Philip* the Beautiful, and which I have aſſerted were not wrought up into Dialogue, but only repreſented in dumb Shew. Two Ages after they were exhibited at *Paris*; and becauſe Time gradually perfects every thing of this Nature, they were perhaps in the Year 1550 arrived at that Degree of Perfection mentioned by *Ruſcelli*. I muſt again expreſs my Surprize that this Art ſhould be loſt, and the very Traces of it undiſcoverable in *France*.

It is indeed aſtoniſhing that the *French* Theatre ſhould have remained ſo wretchedly bad (as we find it to be, not only by its printed Production, but by the Accounts of ſo many Authors) till the Year 1650, and even in the Time of *Corneille*. They who have ſpoke of this make no other Apology for it than the Ignorance of the Times when it was in its *Infancy*; for ſo they chuſe to call its firſt Beginnings. But did not this Infancy laſt too long? Sure it did; for an hundred Years paſſed between the Opening of the Theatre of *Bourgogne* and the Days of *Corneille* and *Moliere*, the former born in 1606, and the latter in 1621. Had not their Au-

thors (during that Age of pretended Ignorance) the Aids of the *Italian* Theatre, which at that Time flouriſhed? The Pieces which had been acted on the Stage of *Italy* were not then unknown in *France*; for many of them were tranſlated into that Language.

Here I ſhall only mention the Titles of theſe Pieces, the Times in which they were printed, and the Names of ſome of thoſe tranſlating Authors. "*Joſias*, a Tragedy "tranſlated from the *Italian* of *Meſſer Pi-* "*lone* into *French* Verſe, by *Louis des Mazu-* "*res de Tournay*, in 8vo. in the Year 1556. "*The Sophoniſba* of *Claude Mermet*, tran- "ſlated from *Triſſimo* in 1584. *The Cartha-* "*ginian* of *Montchretien*, of which the "Machinery and Scenes are the ſame with "thoſe of *Triſſimo* in 1619. *The Two Pro-* "*ſtitutes* of *Hierome d' Avoſt de la Val*, tran- "ſlated from *Domenichi*. *The Counterfeits*, "a Comedy tranſlated from the *Arioſto* in "1552. *The Necromancer*, a Comedy "tranſlated from the *Arioſto* in Proſe, by the "*Sieur de la Taile de Bondaroy* in 1568. "*The Emilia* of *Lewis Groto, the blind Man* "*of Hadria*, in 1608. *The Bravadoes of* "*Captain Spavante* by *Francis Andreini*, a "Comedy tranſlated by *John de Fonteney* in "1608. *Solyman, Emperor of the Turks*, "a Tragedy tranſlated from *Bonorelli* by "*D' Alibras* in 1637." Theſe Tranſla-

tions were made by thoſe who were either ſenſible of a Barrenneſs of Genius for Invention, or were unwilling to put themſelves to that Trouble.

All theſe Tranſlations from the *Italian* were brought into *France* either by Chance, or by the Caprice of ſome Writers; for the Source of the *French* Imitation was *Spain*, which for a Century paſt has been the ſole Model for their Theatre. *Corneille* and *Moliere* have in the *Spaniſh* Drama found excellent Ideas for Tragedy and Comedy; and even the Authors of the preſent Age do now, and always may find the ſame, ſince (as I have elſewhere obſerved) the *Spaniſh* Theatre is an unexhauſtible Source for the Drama. But the *Spaniſh* Theatre, notwithſtanding the Abundance of its Subjects, and the Variety of its Intrigues, did not at firſt contribute to the Eſtabliſhment of a good Taſte on the *French* Theatre, and it was neceſſary that ſuperior Geniuſes ſhould point out the Uſe that was to be made of theſe Subjects and Intrigues.

At the Time when *Peter Corneille* diſtinguiſhed himſelf above all his Cotemporaries, by treading (if I may ſo ſpeak) in the right Path, the *Cid*, the *Horace*, the *Cinna*, and all the other Tragedies of that great Man did not all of a ſudden correct the reigning Taſte of the Theatre, but by degrees opened

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the Eyes of the Spectators, who at length came to the Knowledge of true Beauty in Dramatic Performances.

This however did not hinder the Dramatic Poets from going ſtill on in their old Road; and ſome Tragedies in the Year 1660 were ſo defective and repugnant to good Senſe, that one could never believe them to have been wrote in the Days of *Corneille*. The Example of *Rotrou*, a Tragic Poet, is not only worthy of Admiration, but ought to be a Direction to thoſe whom Genius prompts to write for the Stage. After he had wrote one and thirty Pieces, all compoſed in the *Spaniſh* Taſte, the Applauſes with which the *Cid* of *Peter Corneille* was received made him change his Method, and he wrote *Vinceſlas*, a Piece indeed drawn from the *Spaniſh*, but wrought up in a manner quite different from thoſe he had formerly wrote upon foreign Models. His *Coſroes* which afterwards appeared, does not deviate from the new Path into which he had ſtruck; and here we may obſerve that a great many are deceived, when they aſcribe to *Vinceſlas* the Change of *Corneille*'s Manner. *Racine*, who found the Road paved to him, did not ſcruple to tread it; and one may ſay that, without imitating his Predeceſſor, he has eſtabliſhed the Model of good Tragedy in *France*. Theſe two Authors have no longer left

left the Dramatic Poets in doubt of the beſt Manner of Writing, and all of them have ſince endeavoured to imitate the ſublime of *Corneille*, or the natural and eaſy Manner of *Racine*.

As for Comedy, it, as well as Tragedy, ſtood in need of Alterations and Amendments in order to bring it to Perfection; it did not find the Genius of the two *Corneilles* thoroughly adapted to its proper Character, tho' by their Means it had appeared under a Form leſs deſpicable, and more decent than it had under their Predeceſſors. But to perfect Comedy, a *Moliere* was ſtill wanting, who, deſtined to be the Reſtorer of the Theatre and of the true Comic Taſte, appeared at *Paris* in the Year 1658. He was firſt taken Notice of on Account of his two Comedies entitled *L' Etourdi* and *Le Depit Amoreux*, which were the firſt Eſſays of his Muſe while he was in the Country. A Year after, he publiſhed his *Precieuſes Ridicules*, which was ſoon followed by his *Cocu Imaginaire* and his *Ecole des Maris*. Theſe Pieces, which bore no Reſemblance to any Works either of the Ancients, or of the Moderns, juſtly got him the Reputation of an excellent Comic-Poet, which he has ever ſince kept, and to which I can add nothing by here repeating the Sentiments of Eſteem and Admiration, which through the whole

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of my Writings I have teſtified for that great Man; and I think it my Duty to confeſs, that during my five and forty Years Practice on the Stage, I have ſtudied this Author, and never failed, upon every Review of his Excellence, to find ſome new Beauty, which till then had eſcaped me.

As to the Dramatic Works and Authors appearing in *France* from the Year 1450 till 1500, we have only an Account of three of them, the Subjects of which are the Myſteries of Religion: The Pieces of this kind which now remain, have been confounded with the Impreſſions made ſince 1500. From the Year 1500 till the Year 1600, we may count eighty three Authors, and a hundred and forty ſeven Pieces of a Comical, a Tragical, a Farcical, or a Moral Nature. From that Period to the Year 1700 we find two hundred and ſeventy eight Authors for the Stage, and eleven hundred and eighty eight Dramatical Performances of all kinds: Tho' that Age appears ſo fertile of theſe Productions, yet it is but mere Show; for three Fourths of them are defective, and almoſt unknown to the World; and we may even add that moſt Authors who preceded *Corneille*, *Racine*, and *Moliere*, and even ſome of their Cotemporaries, wrote upon that Model which prevailed in the Infancy of the *French* Theatre. From the Year 1700 to this Time

Time † we have had ſeventy Authors and three hundred and fifty Plays, including thoſe under the Name of the Comical Opera. It appears therefore from this Detail, that from the Year 1450 to 1730, or thereabouts, the *French* have had four hundred and thirty one Authors, who were Fathers of one thouſand ſix hundred and fifty five Dramatical Productions, including the Operas of the Academy of Muſic, which we ſhall mention afterwards.

Tho' the *Italians* in an hundred and fifty Years produced twice as many Dramatical Performances as the *French* did in two hundred and eighty Years, yet we are not on that Account to give the Preference to *Italy*. The greateſt Dramatic Excellence of the *Italians* during that Period, falls ſhort of what *France* can ſhew in ſeventy Years. All the Nations in *Europe* ought to yeild this to ‡ *France*, ſince their Productions, however numerous, are miſerably defective and lame. The *French* Theatre, by a Succeſſion of excellent Works, is a Proof of the Character and Genius of her Dramatic Poets, who for the

† Viz. 1737.

‡ The Author, by not being acquainted with the *Engliſh* Stage, has here been very partial to *France*; for it is certain *England* has produced a greater Number of beautiful Tragedies and Comedies than any Nation, and perhaps fewer faulty ones.

the laſt hundred Years have compoſed in a right Manner.

Above all, we may remark how much the *French* Drama has improved in Truth, in Taſte, and in Wit within theſe forty or fifty Years; and I can almoſt venture to affirm, that many of the Theatrical Pieces which were not acted in *France* within that Time, would have ſucceeded in any other Country and have been Stock-plays. As a Proof of this, amongſt all that vaſt Number of *French* Tragedies tranſlated into *Italian*, and acted with Succeſs in *Italy*, a great many of them were never played above once or twice at *Paris*.

There is a ſtrong Probability that in the Infancy of their Stage, and even towards the Middle of the laſt Century, the Actors both in Comedy and Tragedy were generally maſqued. This I can prove by a Remark of a *French* Author, who ſays, in ſpeaking of *Hugues Guerru*, ſurnamed *Flechelles*, and *Gautier Garguille*; "*This Man who was ſo* "*diverting in Farces, ſometimes acted the* "*King very well in ſerious Pieces, and even* "*hit his Gravity and Majeſty with the help* "*of a Maſque and a Night-gown, which* "*concealed his Legs and thin Make.*"

In *France* they highly commend four Comedians, or rather Players of Farces, who, before the Year 1600, roſe from Booths into the

the Theatre of *Burgundy*, where they acted with Applauſe. Their Names were *Turlupin*, *Gautier Garguille*, *Big William*, and *Guillot Gorgu*: Theſe were all maſqued except *Big William*, who inſtead of a Maſque bedaubed his Face with Flower, and had an Art, by the Motion of his Lips, to make it fly upon the Actor who played along with him. All that is told of thoſe excellent Farce-players, proves only that they were Strollers ſo low, and ſo childiſh in their Profeſſion, that their Reputation was entirely owing to the Ignorance of their Age. But if Authors, from the Comedies of *Moliere*, have learned what Truth and Excellence is, the Players, who ſince the Death of that great Man have acted his Works, know how to afford Diverſion to People of Senſe and Quality.

At preſent no maſqued Actors appear on the *French* Stage; they don't ſo much as wear falſe Beards, except when it is abſolutely neceſſary in playing the Part of an old Man; nor does any peculiar Habit prevail in Comedy, except that of *Criſpin*, which is not very old: The Footmen wear Livery, and the Aged are cloathed agreeably to their Years and Character: They are forced indeed to preſerve the Habits peculiar to the Characters of *Moliere* in the ſame Faſhion they were in his Time; and when they make any

any Alteration in this reſpect, the Actors make a like Alteration in the Verſes that allude to the Dreſs, or leave them entirely out.

The Actors who play Tragedy furniſh their Theatrical Habits out of their own Pockets. Theſe Habits which are commonly in the *Greek* or the *Roman* Faſhion, are very expenſive, being all finely embroidered with Gold and Silver: Thoſe of the Women eſpecially, coſt vaſt Sums. The Players of Comedy are obliged to do the ſame, but the Expences among them are very unequal. The Footmen, the Bawds, and the old Men have Dreſſes agreeable to their Characters, and which are not very expenſive. But it is different with thoſe Players who act the Parts of Lovers, and repreſent diſtinguiſhed Characters in Comedy; theſe are often obliged to have new Dreſſes, commonly very magnificent and faſhionable; nay, theſe Actors often invent new Faſhions of their own, which are ſoon followed by the Town. The *Andrians*, and many other Dreſſes aroſe from the Stage. There are ſome Habits deſigned for *particular Characters* or Diſguiſes, which being very extraordinary, are paid out of the Purſe-ſtock, eſpecially when there are ſome Diverſions extraordinary in the Entertainment.

In *France* the Spectators (I mean thoſe in the

the Pit) have always behaved in a turbulent Manner. We ſee by a Regulation of the Civil Magiſtrate, made on the 5th of *February* 1596, That *every Perſon is prohibited from doing any Violence in the Play-houſe of* Burgundy *during the Time any Piece is performing, as likewiſe from throwing Stones, Duſt, or any other thing which may put the Audience into an Uproar, or create any Tumult*, &c.

Lewis XIV. reſolved to eſtabliſh Decency and Tranquillity in public Shews: For this effect (beſides the old Guard kept by the Crown) he ordered every Perſon who diſturbed the Shew, either by whiſtling, or making any other Noiſe, to be kept in Priſon for a Year and a Day. This Law is ſtill in being, and is now and then reinforced by the Lieutenant of the Police.

The Theatres of *France* are built almoſt in the ſame Form with thoſe of *Italy*, which were the Models of all the reſt in *Europe*, except that beyond the Pit, there is a Place a little elevated, called the Amphitheatre. This Amphitheatre has Seats, and is ſunk a little lower than the firſt Row of Boxes, that all the Spectators may have the ſame free and open View of the Stage. There is alſo at the Foot of the Theatre a kind of Area, called the Orcheſtrum, which was formerly deſigned for the Muſic, but by contracting their

their Accommodation, the Spectators may now have Seats there. The Entry to it is below the Theatre, and it accommodates about forty or fifty Perſons, who pay the ſame Price with the Stage; and when the Houſe is thronged, the Women ſit in it on little Seats without Backs, juſt as they do on the Amphitheatre. The Theatres here are very ſmall, having only three Ranges of Boxes. There are not here (as in *Italy*) five or ſix Rows of Boxes; and the largeſt Pit in *France* contains no more than five or ſix hundred Perſons ſtanding, and very much crowded.

This Cuſtom of ſtanding in the Pit is not very ancient in *Franee*, for it is evident that the Spectators had formerly Seats in it, as may be ſeen by a Book wrote by *M. M. D. P.* printed at *Paris* in 1668, entitled *Ideas of the new Shews*. In this Piece ſome Advices are given with regard to certain Uſages that needed Reformation; and in ſpeaking of the Time immediately before a Play, the Author adviſes (in favour of the Citizens, and eſpecially the Ladies) *to have ſome regard to their own Conveniency, and to take their Seats in the Pit*, which would be a ſure and eaſy Expedient for preventing Tumult and Diſorder, ſince People ſtand a far better Chance of being diſtinguiſhed when they ſit than when they ſtand in a Crowd. This Cuſtom has been followed in the Theatres lately erected

in the Fares of *St. Germain* and *St. Laurence*, where both Women and Men have Seats; only that in these two Theatres they are so modest as to call that the *Parquet* which in other Theatres is called the *Pit*.

As for the Hour of drawing the Curtain it has not always been the same; for on the 12th of *November* 1609, the Civil Magistrate, with the Advice of the King's Procurator, made a Regulation, by which *the Comedians were ordered (from St.* Martin's *Day till the 15th of* February*) to open their Doors at one o'Clock, to begin the Entertainment with such Persons as should be present at Two in the Afternoon, and to put an End to it at half an Hour after Four at most**. But it appears by the Book above cited, that this Regulation was not observed in 1668; for the Author advises the Comedians, for their own Advantage, to open their Doors in Winter half an Hour after Three, and in Summer half an Hour after Four, from which we may conclude that the Entertainments of his Days did not begin till six o'Clock. The same Author complains of the Custom the Spectators had of placing themselves on the Theatre, which by the bye still continues; and tho' it be vastly prejudicial to Action, in *France* they take no Exception at it, so much is it the Custom.

As to the Admittance-Money, the Regu-

* *La Marr*'s Treatise of Policy.

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lation of the Civil Magiſtrate in 1609, of which we have already ſpoke, (in order to prevent the Comedians augmenting it at their Pleaſure) fixes it in theſe Terms: *Comedians are hereby prohibited from taking more than five for the Pit, and ten Sols for the Boxes and Galleries*, &c. But this Price was augmented in proportion as Money roſe in its Value. Under the Reign of *Lewis* XIV. the firſt Boxes on the Theatre and the Orcheſtrum could not be had under three Livres. The ſecond Boxes and the Amphitheatre not under thirty Sols. The Pit not under fifteen Sols; and the third Row of Boxes not under twenty. For about thirty Years under the ſame Reign, the Entrance-Money for Plays was raiſed a fourth for the Benefit of Hoſpitals; ſo that at preſent the Places in the firſt Boxes of the Stage, the Amphitheatre, and the Orcheſtrum coſt four Livres: The Amphitheatre within theſe few Years is the ſame Price with the Stage, becauſe in reality it contains the beſt Seats in the Houſe. The ſecond Row of Boxes coſt forty Sols; the third thirty, and the Pit twenty.

The Play-houſe has two Street-doors, one leading to the Pit only, the other to all the other Diviſions of the Houſe. On one Side of theſe Entrances there is a Place with Bars, thro' which the Spectator receives a Ticket that introduces him either to the Pit

or the other Places, and the Ticket is commonly marked with the Name of the Seat that is paid for. The Receiver of this, upon delivering it at the Inner-Door of the Play-houſe, gets another there, marked *Counter-marque*, with the Name of the Place he is entitled to. Theſe Tickets are again delivered to the People who are placed to open the Boxes, to ſee the Company ſeated in them, and then to ſhut them up as ſoon as they contain eight Perſons, that is, four upon the fore, and four upon the back Seat. Thus eight may be in one Box, Men and Women, and none of them know one another. But the Truth is, that ſometimes it is very troubleſome Sitting there on account of the Lady's Hoops; therefore to avoid the Inconveniency, the Ladies commonly ſend in the Morning, or the Night before, to beſpeak a Box for themſelves. Each firſt Box is equivalent to eight Places, and amounts to thirty two Livres, and they who hire it reſerve it wholly to themſelves. The ſecond Row pays in proportion ſixteen Livres, and with regard to the third, as they are upon a level with the Gallery, no Place can be kept there, but by ſending a Servant without Livery to keep one, as is done on the Stage and Orcheſtrum, *&c.*

The firſt Front-Box on the right-hand is called the King's Box; and all the Range on that

that Side to the Bottom of the Play-houſe is called the King's Side. The firſt Front-Box on the left-hand is called the Queen's Box, and all the Range on that Side is called the Queen's Side; and indeed theſe Boxes are ſet aſide for the King and Queen, whenever their Majeſties honour the Play-houſe with their Preſence, which happens very ſeldom, becauſe there is a Play-houſe at Court where the Players act as often as they receive Orders.

If the Princes and Princeſſes of the Blood come to the Play-houſe, their Birth entitles them to the principal Boxes, even tho' they may be hired by private People, who are in that Caſe obliged to take up with inferior Boxes. The Princes of the Blood commonly ſit upon the Stage, and then the Players make a Pauſe in the Action, and all the Spectators riſe out of Reſpect, and the Princes place themſelves in the firſt Seat, which is yielded by whoever poſſeſſes it; and when the Play is done, the Player who gives out the next Play makes a profound Reverence to them, and with all due reſpect craves their Permiſſion to give it out.

Formerly when a new Play had a Run, they acted it every Day for two or three Months ſucceſſively, which fatigued the Actors and Audience, eſpecially Strangers, who for that Time were obliged to take up with a dull Repetition of the ſame Play. This

Inconveniency is remarked by the Author of a little Book, entitled *New Diverſions*; but at preſent the new Plays are acted only every other Day, ſo that during the Run, the Spectators are entertained with other Plays.

The firſt Opera ſung in *Paris* was in 1645, the Cardinal *Mazarine* having cauſed Muſicians, an Architect, and all neceſſary Workmen to come on purpoſe from *Italy*; and it was exhibited in the *Little Bourbon*, where, by Order of the ſame Cardinal, others were exhibited for ſeveral Years following with greater Magnificence, but they were all *Italian*. The firſt was called *La Treſta Teatrale della Trinta Pazza di giulo Strozzi*, which had appeared in *Italy* for ſome Years before.

As to the firſt *French* Opera, Mr. *De la Marr* places it in the Year 1672, and the Author of the *Dramatic Library* places it in the ſame Year in which the Abbe *Perin* received the Royal Privilege, which was in 1671, and which the Year afterwards reverted to Mr. *Lully*. Theſe firſt Operas were like thoſe in *Italy*, eſpecially in the Machinery; but ſince the *Italians* have left that off, it is diſuſed in all Places except in *France*, and eſpecially at *Paris*, where that Taſte ſtill prevails. It is true, it has never yet been brought to that Pitch of Perfection as it was in *Italy*; but ſtill it gives a great Pleaſure to

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the Spectators who love Machinery, which they do the more as it is to be met with almoſt in no other Part of *Europe* but there. As *France* had no other Model from which ſhe could take her Opera but that of *Italy*, I was tempted to think that *Quinault* had copied from them in his Opera. That of *Proſerpine* was exhibited in *Venice* in the Year 1644, and the *Proſerpine* of *Quinault* in 1680: That of *Perſeus* was acted at *Venice* in the Year 1665, and that of *Quinault* at *Paris* in 1682. In the Year 1639 the Opera of *Armida* was exhibited at *Venice*, and the ſame of *Quinault* was exhibited at *Paris* in 1686. It is very probable that theſe Subjects ſerved as a Model in ſome meaſure to the *French* Opera. I have not indeed examined theſe *Italian* Operas, having never ſeen them acted, therefore I can ſay no more on that Subject: But I am led into that way of thinking, becauſe in the Infancy of the *Italian* Opera, it often conſiſted of very ſerious Tragedies, in which were introduced the Characters of old Women, Bawds, and comical Serving-men; a Method intirely copied by *Quinault* in his firſt Operas.

No Spectators ſit upon the Stage in the Opera, becauſe that would be a great hinderance to the Execution of the Machinery, the Choruſes, and the Dancing, the Stage of the Opera being in its Contrivance nothing diffe-

rent from that of the Play-house. With regard to the Price it is double that of any other Entertainment, in proportion to the Preference of Places.

From the Year 1671 to the Year 1737 inclusively, we reckon one hundred and thirty two Operas, comprehending *Castor* and *Pollux*, and the two *Italian* Operas acted at *Paris*, and including all that either had or had not Success.

The Opera is surprizingly magnificent in the Number and Quality of its Dresses; the Embroidery is but Tinsel, yet it is of an excellent Taste, and makes as fine a Shew as the best Dresses in the Play-house. The Diversity and Gallantry of the Dancing-Dresses is very magnificent and peculiar to *France*, and all is provided at the Expence of the Undertakers.

The Decorations of the Stage of the Opera are very handsome, but not to be compared with those of *Italy*, the Smallness of the Stage not admitting of their being either so large or so magnificent as those of the vast Theatres of *Venice*, *Milan*, &c. But their Dancing makes up for all their Deficiency in Point of Decoration.

All *Europe* knows what a Capacity and Genius the *French* have for Dancing, and how universally it is admired and followed; however the World is divided on that Subject at present,

preſent, ſome People pretend that true and graceful Dancing is loſt, and they condemn high Dancing, eſpecially in Women; others prefer this to the ſmooth Dancing and the Beauty of an Attitude. I ſhall decide nothing upon this Subject, only I ſhall lay before the Readers a Reflection I have made.

Formerly all the Dancers of the Opera in *Germany* and other Countries were brought from *Paris*; in a certain Term of Years they commonly returned to *France* without leaving any Pupils who were capable to eſtabliſh in their Country a Taſte for *French* Dancing, except for the Minuet, the Bouree, and Courant, *&c.* they were therefore ſtill obliged to recal the *French* Dancers; but at preſent the *Italian* Nobility who travel, and who formerly were enchanted with the Dancing in the Opera at *Paris*, are not only no longer ſurprized, but pretend that their own Country can boaſt a Preference in this Science. This appears to me ſo much the more unreaſonable, becauſe when they are aſked in what the Excellency of their Dancing conſiſts, they anſwer, that for one top Dancer at *Paris*, they have a Dozen in *Italy* of equal Excellency; from whence I conclude, that the preſent Method of Dancing is neither the beſt nor the moſt difficult, as it can be ſo eaſily imitated by Strangers, who never could have done it, had it been more ſimple and full of native Graces.

PARALLEL

PARALLEL

Between the

Italian, Spaniſh, and *French* THEATRE.

THESE three Theatres, of which I have given a ſhort Hiſtory, were without Diſpute the firſt that *Europe* ſaw. The Original of the Stage in *Spain* and in *Italy* is, as I have already remarked, wrapt up in ſo thick a Veil of Obſcurity, that to diſſipate it ſeems to me next to impoſſible, or to decide, for Certainty, which of them gave a Model to the other. On the one hand, the old *Italian* Plays leave us in the dark as to the Time in which they appeared; on the other, no *Spaniſh* Play which I have met with bears Date before the Year 1500, which would induce me to believe it to be later than the other, did not the *Spaniards* aſſert the contrary, tho' without advancing one Proof to ſupport their Aſſertion. We ſhall therefore leave to theſe two Nations the Plea-

ſure

ſure of contending for the Antiquity of their Stages.

The *Italians* in their firſt Theatrical Performances imitated, perhaps too ſervily, *Plautus* and *Terence*: They however laid aſide in their Plays the Cuſtoms and Manners of the ancient *Romans*, which agreed not at all with the Age they lived in. The Amours of the young Gentlemen with the Slaves, or with the Ladies of Pleaſure, were commonly the Subjects of the *Latin* Pieces. The *Italians* copying after them, and thinking Licentiouſneſs to be a neceſſary Quality in Comedy, ſubſtituted Intrigues with married Women, Tricks of Monks, Traffics of Procurers, and in ſhort the moſt ſcandalous and criminal Acts of corrupted Manners. In this they committed an inexcuſable Fault. In vain do they pretend that they aim at correcting Licentiouſneſs, for when it is repreſented on the Stage, that Gayneſs and Looſneſs, with which it is accompanied, is apt to debauch the Minds of the Spectators; and even the Heart that is leaſt corrupted is highly offended at it; for which Reaſon Prudence ought to prevail with the Dramatic Writers to expoſe and cenſure only the *Ridiculous*, the Images of Vice being too dangerous. When the *Italian* Stage amended as to Scandal, it ſunk in Genius and Taſte, which makes it neceſſary, in reading their Comedies,

Comedies in that Language, to be acquainted with theſe licentious Pieces.

The *Spaniards*, on the contrary, repreſented nothing in their Comedies but honourable Love between unmarried People. The Cuſtoms, by Jealouſy, introduced into *Spain*, afford room for Intrigue in theſe ſort of Subjects, which in another would produce a Play ſo uniform, as to be for the moſt Part void of any Action, The romantic Point of Honour, by which the *Spaniſh* Nation may be characteriſed, fills up great Part of their Theatrical Works. Their Servants ſpeak not ſo freely by far, as in *Italy*; but to make up for that, it is not unuſual to hear them imprecating and ſwearing by the whole Catalogue of Saints. The Mixture of the Sacred and Prophane is very frequent in the *Los Autos Sacramentales*, of which I have ſpoken. There is one in particular, entitled *Le Chevalier de St. Sacrement*. In this Comedy we ſee a Church on Fire, ſo as they deſpair of extinguiſhing it. A Chevalier runs into the Flames, and returns with the Hoſt in his Hand. This Action, which elſewhere would perhaps be condemned, paſſes in *Spain* for a moſt reſpectful Mark of Zeal, and the Spectators are at once edified and affected. In theſe Sort of Entertainments, Farce has its Share, which muſt be diſagreeable to every Man of Senſe: But, to take

take it in the whole, the *Spaniſh* Stage is that which with the moſt Eaſe may be chaſtiſed into the pureſt Decency.

As to *France*, if ſhe did not produce Works for the Theatre ſo early as the other Countries, ſhe was not very ſlow in following them, but much more late in arriving at Perfection. Tragedy itſelf was not exempted from Licentiouſneſs. *Rotrou* began the Reformation, which was accompliſhed ſoon after by *Corneille*. * *Moliere* is the firſt that brought *Good Manners* upon the Stage, tho' imperfectly. They who immediately ſucceeded him have been more looſe than he. But during the Space of thirty Years, the *French* Stage has inceſſantly refined itſelf from that Fault, the Praiſe of which is due to the Audiences at *Paris:* It is owing to them that their Poets are checked, by denying their Applauſe to every thing that bears an Air of Indecency. We ſee Riſe given to Theatrical Repreſentations of a new Kind, the Traces of a Model of which we may diſcern in the *Spaniſh* Theatre, and ſome few in the *Italians*, but both very imperfect. There are Characters in the World of too low

* We don't know if a diſcerning Reader will agree with our Author in this Criticiſm, ſince it is certain that as to Decency of Character *Moliere* has been improved upon by few of his Succeſſors.

low a Station for Tragedy, and yet too high to deſcend to that kind of Drollery required by Comedy. They accommodate an Action ſuitable to theſe Characters, and work it up with moving Circumſtances, which occaſion an agreeable Entertainment; and in its Conſequences this kind of Comedy may a good deal injure Tragedy, but it carries the Cataſtrophe inſenſibly to that Point where Religion and Decency requires it ſhould terminate.

This Kind, as it had its Beginning but lately, is as yet imperfect; for when the Circumſtances of the Piece are as moving as thoſe of Tragedy, the Mixture of low Humour which interpoſes, drives from our Minds that Concern which we are ready to indulge. But it is eaſy to amend this Deficiency, and ſome bright Genius will doubtleſs raiſe this new kind of Writing to Perfection †.

In the moſt affecting Subjects we may ſuſtain

† My Work was finiſh'd when *L'Ecole des Amis*, wrote by Mr. *De la Chauſſée*, one of the Members of the *French* Academy appear'd. That Piece may ſerve as a Model for Productions of this kind. Some however have ſo far miſtaken it, as to pronounce it a Comedy writ in the Manner of the incomparable *Moliere*; and not finding his comical Turn in it, (which indeed ought to have no Place in a Work of its kind) have ſpoke too contemptibly of it, and by that means have brought a greater Slur upon their own Judgments than upon the Piece itſelf.

ſuſtain a Dignity of Humour which may ariſe from the Subject itſelf; but this is a Perfection only attainable by a fertile Genius. The modern Authors will, without doubt, endeavour to perfect this Species of Comedy, fearing leſt they be reproached by the World, of having embraced this Kind, out of Deſpair of attaining to the Sublime of *Corneille*, or the Humour and Wit of *Moliere*.

In ſhort the *French* Theatre will ſuſtain its Glory, and every Day increaſe it, becauſe it produces Entertainments of a new Sort, when the Audience are tired with a Repetition of the old ones.

THE

THE ENGLISH THEATRE.

IF the Commencement of the *Engliſh* Theatre was not ſo early as the others, it ſeems to have followed ſoon after. The Origin of the firſt Dramatic Repreſentations in *England* had the ſame Riſe with thoſe of *Italy*, *Spain*, and *France*; I may venture to ſay that they copied from the *Mimi* of the *Latins*, while like Vagabonds they travelled up and down the Country without Reſerve and without Shame.

In the Reign of *Edward* III, which began in 1015, and ended in 1038, it is ſaid in a Book printed at *London*, that that good King ordained by Act of Parliament, *that a Company of Men called Vagrants, who had made Maſquerades throughout the whole City, ſhould be whipt out of* London, *becauſe they repreented ſcandalous Things in the little Alehouſes*, and

and other Places where the Populace aſſembled.

There is good Reaſon, tho' no Certainty, for believing that theſe ſcandalous Amuſements were of long ſtanding in the City of *London*, but were over-looked by all preceding Kings. The ſame happened in *France* in the Time of *Charlemagne*; and the Statutes publiſhed by theſe two good Kings conceal the Original of the Drama in theſe two Nations.

After ſo poſitive and rigorous a Decree in *England*, nothing that had the leaſt Reſemblance of a *Play* could appear in *London*, or the reſt of the Kingdom, unleſs diſguiſed beneath the Veil of Religion. It was therefore by theſe ſacred Repreſentations that the Theatre began to form itſelf in *London*, as before it had done in *Paris*.

We find in a Book called *The* * *Antiquities of London*, that under *Richard* II, who reigned in the Year 1378, the Clergy and the Scholars of St. *Paul*'s School preſented a Petition to the King, praying his Majeſty, *To prohibit a Company of unexpert People from preſenting the Hiſtory of the* Old Teſtament, *to the great Prejudice of the ſaid Clergy, who have been at great Charge and Expence, in order to repreſent it publickly at* Chriſtmas.

* STOW's.

It is therefore in theſe Times that we can fix an Epocha for the Moral Repreſentations of the *Old Teſtament* in the City of *London*. We cannot ſay, however, that they began preciſely in that Year when the Petition, we mentioned before, was preſented. They might perhaps have been introduced a long time before; I am led to think thus by theſe Words made uſe of in the Petition, *A Company of unexpert People*. Had not the Clergy and the Boys of St. *Paul*'s School been long exerciſed in Affairs of this Nature, and uſed to give ſuch Repreſentations to the People, they would not have ſtiled Perſons, who undertook to repreſent the like, *unexpert*. But as no *Engliſh* Hiſtorian, or other learned Perſon have treated this Subject *ex profeſſo*, it is not poſſible to clear it from that Obſcurity in which it is left. We muſt therefore content ourſelves with eſtabliſhing its Epocha in the Year 1378, and ſaying, that the Uſe of theſe holy Repreſentations inſenſibly led them to the prophane Theatre.

Richard II reigned twenty two Years, till the Year 1399. Suppoſing that the Boys of St. *Paul*'s School preſented their Petition the ſame Year that the King died, yet the ſame Petition lets us know, that the Boys had played theſe Myſteries ſome time before, and that for Money. And we know the *Fraternity of the Paſſion* did not begin to act

at

at *St. Maur* before 1398. It is therefore evident that the Eſtabliſhment of a public Theatre in *England* was before that in *France*. I do not believe that the *Engliſh* preceded the *French* in the acting of Myſteries, which were in *France* many Years before the Repreſentation at *St. Maur*; and much leſs Ground have we for diſputing with the *Engliſh* their being the firſt that expoſed their Entertainments publickly, and for Money.

The *Engliſh* Chronicles ſpeak of a prophane Repreſentation, which is commonly in that Country ſaid to be the firſt they had. Theſe * Chronicles ſay, that

The 7th Day of May 1520, *the King cauſed a Maſquerade to be prepared, and ordered a Stage to be raiſed in the Great Hall at* Greenwich, *&c. The King, Queen, and Nobility came there to the Repreſentation of a good Comedy of* Plautus.

We are therefore to believe that from the Year 1378 to 1520, no prophane Farces appeared at *London* either mixt with the *ſacred*, or diſtinct from it, as happened in *France*. And if really that *Good Comedy of* PLAUTUS was the firſt that appeared, we muſt yield to the *Engliſh* the Merit of having opened their Stage with a GOOD *prophane Piece*, whilſt the other Nations in *Europe* began theirs with the moſt *wretched Farces*.

* *Holling ſhed.*

The ſame thing may be ſaid with regard to Tragedy, the firſt of which was played before Queen *Elizabeth*; and we find in the Appendix to the Lives of the *Engliſh* Dramatic Poets, that

" The Lord *Buckhurſt*, afterwards Earl " of *Dorſet*, writ, in Conjunction with Mr. " *Norton*, a Tragedy, valued in thoſe Days, " of which there were three Impreſſions. " The Title to the firſt Edition is FORREX " and PORREX printed in 8vo. at *London* in " 1565 by *G. G.*"

The ſecond Edition was printed by Conſent of the Authors with this Title, " The " Tragedy of *Forrex* and *Porrex* without " Augmentation or Diminution, as it was " acted before the Queen nine Years ago," that is, on the 18th of *January* 1565, by the Gentlemen of the *Inner-Temple*, printed in 8vo. at *London*.

The Title of the third Edition is, " The " Tragedy of *Gorbeduc*, of which three Acts " are written by *Thomas Norton*, and the " other two by *Thomas Sackville*, publiſhed " as it was preſented before the Queen in " the *Inner-Temple*, printed in 4to. in *London* 1590." In this laſt Edition † the *Engliſh* Writer lets us know that they changed the

† A Miſtake: For *Buckhurſt* was called *Sackville*.

the Title and the Name of one of the Authors: I can't imagine for what Reaſon.

Thus we ſee the firſt perfect Comedy and the firſt perfect Tragedy of the *Engliſh*, which gives not a little Glory to that Nation. The Perfection of the Comedy is not to be queſtioned, ſeeing it was one of the *good* Comedies of *Plautus*. But as to the Tragedy I don't know, if upon the ſole Report of that Writer, who ſpeaks in its Praiſe, and is influenced by *its great Reputation*, if we may form the ſame Opinion of it, and implicitely rely upon the Judgment of that Age. It was the firſt Tragedy that had appeared in that Country. The *French*, their Neighbours, could ſhew them no Original fit to copy after, becauſe what they had were very low. And *Italy*, whoſe Theatre had attained to the higheſt Pitch of its Glory, was at too great a Diſtance for *England* to imitate. We may therefore doubt of the Perfection of this firſt *Engliſh* Tragedy; and altho' in that Age it might have been accounted excellent, yet might it not be ſo in reality: We ſhall form a better Judgment of this in proſecuting the Hiſtory of their Theatre.

In the Life of *Shakeſpear* prefixed to his Works, we read that "in the Year 1590 there were profeſſed Comedians in *London*, but they had no eſtabliſhed Theatre, and played no

Tragedies, for then they had no Idea of them in *London.*" Tho' this is ſpeaking very poſitively, yet it appears to be falſe, becauſe Tragedy was known in the former Part of that Reign, if that, of which we have given an Account, was acted. It is not to be thought that in the Space of twenty five Years which had paſſed ſince *Gorbeduc* appeared, all Remembrance of it could be effaced; the three Editions which I have mentioned were certainly ſufficient to preſerve its Memory. Wherefore I think that to judge rightly of this, we ſhould conclude that Tragedy was unknown in *England*, becauſe *Gorbeduc* was the only one, and it not having been acted in Public, but confined to the Court, the common Players not having a Reliſh for it, perhaps this kind of Dramatic Poetry was unknown till *Shakeſpear*'s Time.

William Shakeſpear for a ſmall Trip of Youth was obliged to leave the Country and come up to *London*, where he commenced Player. He was bleſſed with Genius and Capacity; and wrote a ‡ Comedy much liked by Queen *Elizabeth*. She, to expreſs her Regard for *Shakeſpear*, granted a Patent to the Comedians, declared them her Servants, and formed them into a Company, with proper

‡ The Merry Wives of Windſor.

per Appointments, and the Uſe of a Theatre.

In the Year 1596 *Shakeſpear*, at the Age of thirty three, gave the World his firſt Tragedy of *Romeo* and *Juliet*; and the Year after he produced *Richard* II.

James I, who ſucceeded Queen *Elizabeth*, by a Licence confirmed the Privileges of that Company of Comedians: He named nine new Actors, and ſtiled them his Servants. This Licence is conceived in Terms, Part of which I think neceſſary to repeat; it ſays towards the End, " And we permit them to " perform the ſaid Plays, Tragedies, Inter- " ludes, Moral Pieces, Paſtorals, Stage- " Plays, and ſuch like in Public, and for " their greater Advantage, (when the Infection " of the Plague ſhall ceaſe) as well in our " Houſe called the *Globe*, in our County of " *Surry*, as in the Cities, Halls, Public " Places, or any other privileged Place, and " in any Borough of our ſaid Kingdom."

In this Licence of *James* I. two Things are remarkable. In 1603, when it was publiſhed by the King, the *Engliſh* Comedians performed all theſe ſeveral kind of Theatrical Repreſentations, that we find mentioned in their Charter: This Theatre therefore muſt have been of long ſtanding, ſince all the different kinds of Dramatic Poems were then known, which could not be expected in the

Practice of twenty or thirty Years. Mention in the Licence is likewiſe made of public Places, and which lets us ſee that in *England*, as well as in *France*, they uſed upon Scaffolds to play as well moral as prophane Plays. Plays being twice mentioned, firſt ſingly, and a little lower with the Addition of Stage-Plays, leads us to know that two Species of Comedy are ſpoken of: Thus making apparent Diſtinction between thoſe that were played in public Places, and thoſe played on an eſtabliſhed Theatre. We are therefore forced to conjecture, that during the two hundred Years from 1378, moral Repreſentations and prophane Farces had been performed, and that they were at leaſt tolerated by the Kings, tho' not licenced by their Authority.

Before *Shakeſpear* embraced the Profeſſion of a Player, there was a Theatre in *London*, that is to ſay, Dramatic Performances had been exhibited there for a long time. It is true that little Mention is made of it, only in the Life of that Poet we read, that to him we owe *Ben. Johnſon*, who by his Encouragement writ his Comedies. Thus by theſe two Poets, the greateſt that their Age or Country ever produced, *England* is enabled to fix the Epocha of her Theatre.

It is ſurpriſing that Tragedy firſt roſe in *England* by every Horror that human Imagination

gination can ſuggeſt, and that the Taſte for it ſtill remains, notwithſtanding the Attempts of ſome Authors, who have endeavoured to give it another Turn. I have examined into the Reaſon of it, and tho' I may be miſtaken, yet ſhall I always ſpeak what I think.

It ought not to be queſtioned that the chief Aim of a Dramatic Writer is to pleaſe the Spectators, and that to do this, he muſt be acquainted with the Bent of their Inclinations. When the Poet fancies he has attained to that Knowledge, he ſtudies to ſet before them Images and Actions ſuitable to the Taſte of that Nation for which he writes.

When that is ſuppoſed, it muſt be granted that Theatrical Pieces let us into the general Character of their ſeveral Countries, and that without any other Light than what is ſtruck out of the ancient and modern Plays, we might judge that the *Grecians* were violent and given to Pleaſure; that the *Romans* were ſenſual, but always with an Air of Grandeur; With the *Romans* we may rank the *Italians*, with ſome little Difference; we may ſay that the Quality of the *Spaniards* is a noble Braveneſs, that they are punctilious, and myſterious; and the *French*, on the other hand, are witty, airy, and gay to Exceſs: And of all theſe different Characters, I don't know if any is far diſtant from Truth. One there-

therefore might be tempted to believe from *Shakeſpear*'s preſenting to them the moſt horrible Objects, that the *Engliſh* are cruel, inexorable, and next to inhuman, whereas indeed nothing is leſs true. The *Engliſh* are gentle, humane, extremely polite, but generally penſive to Exceſs. It is this laſt Quality that forms their general Character, as their own Writers agree. Let us proceed.

The *Engliſh* Dramatic Poets have, beyond Imagination, ſtained their Stage with Blood; of this I ſhall give you two Examples only. In the Tragedy of *Hamlet*, five principal Characters die violent Deaths during the Action. About the middle of the Play we ſee the Funeral of a Princeſs; the Grave is dug on the Stage, out of which are thrown Bones and Skulls: A Prince comes then and takes up a Skull in his Hand, which the Grave-digger informs him was the Skull of the late King's Jeſter; he makes a moral Diſſertation upon the Skull of the Jeſter, which is reckoned a Maſter-piece: The Audience liſten with Admiration, and applaud with Tranſport: And it is for that Scene that the major Part of the Spectators reſort to the Play-houſe when *Hamlet* is performed. In the Tragedy of the *Moor of Venice*, among other Things, the *Moor* inflamed with Jealouſy, goes to ſearch for his Wife, who lies awake in Bed; he ſpeaks with her, and after ſtrong Conflicts between

between Love and Rage, he reſolves to be revenged, and ſtrangles her before the Eyes of the Spectators. Were I to give a Detail of every thing horrible that is to be found in *Engliſh* Tragedy, it would be hard to be perſuaded of the *Engliſh* being ſo very gentle and humane, as I have painted them, and as they are in Effect: We ſhould rather be induced to think, that the Poet preſented for the Entertainment of his Countrymen, what was moſt agreeable to their Cruelty and Ferocity. If that was not his Motive, why did he entertain the Nation with Objects ſo terrible? After all theſe Reflections, I will venture to give my Opinion.

The principal Character of the *Engliſh* is, that they are to be plunged in Contemplation, as I obſerved before. It is owing to this their penſive Mood, that the Sciences of the moſt ſublime Nature are by the Writers of that Nation handled with much Penetration, and that Arts are carried to that Pitch of Perfection which they are now arrived at; becauſe their native Melancholy ſupplies them with that Patience and Exactneſs which other Countries have not.

To purſue my Reaſoning; I believe that were there to be exhibited on their Stage, Tragedies of a more refined Taſte, that is, ſtript of thoſe Horrors that ſully the Stage with Blood, the Audience would perhaps fall aſleep.

aſleep. The Experience which their earlieſt Dramatic Writers had of this Truth, led them to eſtabliſh this Species of Tragedy, to raiſe them out of their contemplative Moods, by ſuch bold Strokes as might awaken them.

For the ſame Reaſon, the *Engliſh* Comedies are crowded with Incidents, inſomuch that having adapted to their Stage ſome *French* Plays, the Authors have doubled the Intrigue, or they have joined them with another Plot to keep the Spectator in Breath, and not allow him Time to wander with his Thoughts. The Miſer of *Moliere* among others, which in the Original is perhaps too full of Intrigue, has much more in the *Engliſh* Tranſlations. *Harpagon*'s Miſtreſs, in order to raiſe his Averſion, making great Expence at the Charge of the old Fellow, occaſions an additional Intrigue to that Play, which increaſes the Plot beyond meaſure.

I have ſaid that the *Engliſh* Poets, with Deſign to make lively Impreſſions on the Imaginations of the Spectators, fill their Tragedies with Horror, and over-charge their Comedies with Incidents; with regard to the latter we may add that they have form'd Scenes and Dialogues obſcene to Exceſs. It is not my Deſign to particulariſe any Comedy of that Sort which I have ſeen acted at *London*, but I ſhall refer to Mr. *Collier*'s Criticiſm on the *Engliſh* Stage. He reproaches the

the Poets of his Country with their Licentiouſneſs; and by comparing the ancient Stage with the modern, he ſhews them that no Inſtance of Licentiouſneſs on that Stage was ever equal to what appears on the *Engliſh* Theatre: But the Obſcenities and the Complication of Events in Comedy, have at leaſt as much Force to move the Audience, as the Horror in their Tragedy has Power to touch them. It is, perhaps, by Deſign that the Authors have written in the Taſte which we now have remarked. It were to be wiſhed that theſe Spectators, as well as the Poets, were once well convinced of the true Object of Dramatic Pieces; for the Terror which ought to be inſpired by Tragedy, conſiſts not in the Effuſion of Blood, and the Repreſentation of Death.

In ſhort *Oedipus* who tore out his Eyes, and *Jocaſta* who hang'd herſelf, do not ſo much touch the Audience, as the Reflection of *Oedipus* on being guilty of Inceſt and Parricide. Had *Athaliah* actually perpetrated the Maſſacre of the High Prieſt and *Levites*, as ſhe threatned, we ſhould not be ſo ſenſibly touched, as by her Converſation with young *Joas*, with Deſign to carry him away and deſtroy him. Does not every one tremble in *Iphigenia*, thro' the Fear of ſeeing the Daughter ſacrificed by her Father? Are we not affected in the ſame manner in *Phocas*, who

ſeveral

ſeveral times is upon the Point of cauſing his Son to be killed without knowing him. The Horror which reigns in theſe two *Engliſh* Tragedies that I have named, and in all the others, has not ſuch Force to affect and touch the Spectators, as the real Terror of which I have given ſome Inſtances.

I can't tell what Hopes to entertain of the Reformation of the *Engliſh* Theatre, but we have Proofs to believe it will not be ſudden. It is now twenty five Years ſince Mr. *Addiſon*'s *Cato* appeared at *London* with the univerſal Applauſe of the whole Nation. Without entering into the Merits of that Tragedy, let us only obſerve with what Judgment the Poet choſe a Subject in which both the Parties of the Nation were at the ſame Time intereſted, and he conducted it in ſuch a Manner, that both were equally pleaſed.

It is Mr. *Addiſon* who has with admirable Art put in Execution the grand Point of which I have ſpoken, to ſtudy well the Inclinations of the Spectators, in order to pleaſe them. One would imagine that this Tragedy would have new-modelled the *Engliſh* Stage: But the new Tragedies ſince that Time writ in the ancient Taſte, and particularly one of the lateſt, entitled *George Barnwell*, which met with great Succeſs, leave us no Ground to preſume that ever there will be a Change at all. They ſay, however, that they

they have begun to exhibit ſome Things in the refined Taſte, which met with no bad Reception from the Public. Was this ſucceſsful Beginning proſecuted to Advantage; were the *Engliſh* Poets guided by Reaſon and Truth, the Spectators might improve, and the *French* Stage in a little Time meet with a formidable Rival. No Force or Beauty is wanting in the *Engliſh* Language, to expreſs the noble Sentiments and ſublime Thoughts with which their Tragedies are filled. Nor has it leſs Elegance for Wit and Humour in Comedy, which is often ſet off with more Spirit than in the Plays of other Countries.

Amongſt the Crowd of *Engliſh* Poets, Mr. *Congreve* is moſt eſteemed for Comedy. He was perfectly acquainted with Nature; and was living in 1727, when I was in *London*; I converſed with him more than once, and found in him Taſte joined with great Learning. It is rare to find many Dramatic Poets of his Stamp. The Architecture of their Play-houſe is beautiful and commodious. All the Pit is in Form of an Amphitheatre, where both Sexes ſit promiſcuouſly, which afford a very agreeable Sight. There is but one Row of Boxes, and above are two Galleries with Benches one above another, where People ſit. It is about forty Years ſince the *Engliſh* Nobility went into the Taſte of

Italian

Italian Operas, which they ſupport with great Magnificence, and at an aſtoniſhing Expence. They draw to *London* the beſt Singers in *Italy*, who leave their Country without any Regret, tho' there Muſic meets with very great Encouragement. The Prices for Admiſſion into the Houſe are much the ſame as at *Paris*.

There are commonly two Theatres for acting Comedies and Tragedies, which are nobly ornamented with Decorations and Dreſſes. As to the Actors, if after forty five Years Experience I may be intitled to give my Opinion, I dare advance that the beſt Actors in *Italy* and *France* come far ſhort of thoſe in *England*. The *Italian* and *French* Players, far from endeavouring at that happy Imitation of Nature and Juſtneſs which forms the Beauty of Action, affect a forced, ſtiff Manner of Acting, which never fails to miſlead the Audience. To form the better Judgment of both, let us compare them impartially. The *Engliſh* Authors copy Truth, and are at great Pains not to flag on the Stage. As for me, I have always thought, nor have I been ſingular in my Opinion, that pure ſimple Nature would be cold upon the Stage. This I have experienced in ſeveral Comedians. Wherefore the Action ſhould be heightned a little, and without ſtraying too far from Nature, ſome Art added in the

Speaking,

Speaking. As a Statue to be placed at a Diſtance ſhould be bigger than the Life, that, notwithſtanding the Diſtance, it may appear in due Proportion to the Spectators, ſo the *Engliſh* Actors have the Art, if I may uſe the Expreſſion, to heighten Nature, ſo as it ought to be ſhown at a Diſtance, to let us ſee that it is pure Nature which they repreſent. When I was at *London* a thing happened, which, for its ſingularity, deſerves Notice. At the Theatre in *Lincoln's Inn-Fields* I happened to be at the Acting of a Comedy, the principal Plot of which I was a Stranger to, but with Eaſe could underſtand an Epiſode, which the Author without doubt had placed in the Intrigue: It is that Scene which we have ſo often ſeen in *Criſpin Medecine*. The ſole Alteration that is made therein, is the introducing an old Man in Place of a Footman, who by his Buſtle excites the Laughter of the Audience, while he places himſelf in the room of a dead Body which the Phyſician is to diſſect. The Scene was thus diſpoſed; the amorous old Gentleman entertains himſelf with a Footman belonging to his Miſtreſs's Houſe; the Footman either hears, or pretends to hear, a Noiſe, and deſires the old Fellow to hide himſelf; all the Doors being locked, he adviſes him to place himſelf on the Board on which the Body is laid. After ſome Diffi-

culties made, the old Man conſents to it, and does preciſely what *Criſpin* does in the *French* Comedy: But to give it the greater Air of Truth, the Footman makes the old Man ſtrip to his Shirt; the Operator comes; Chirurgical Inſtruments are brought; he puts himſelf in order to begin the Diſſection; the old Man cries out, and the Trick is diſcovered.

He who acted the old Man executed it to the niceſt Perfection, which one could expect in no Player who had not forty Years Exerciſe and Experience. I was not at all aſtoniſhed in one reſpect, but I was charmed now to find another Mr. *Guerin*, that excellent Comedian, Maſter of the Company at *Paris*, which had the Misfortune to loſe him in our Time. I was miſtaken in my Opinion that a whole Age would not produce ſuch another, when, in our own Time, I found his Match in *England*, with the ſame Art, and with Talents as ſingular. As he played the Part of an old Man, I made no manner of doubt of his being an old Comedian, who, inſtructed by long Experience, and at the ſame time aſſiſted by the Weight of his Years, had performed it ſo naturally. But how great was my Surpriſe, when I learn'd that he was a young Man of about twenty ſix! I could not believe it; but I own'd that it might be poſſible, had he only uſed a trembling and broken

broken Voice, and had only an extreme Weakneſs poſſeſſed his Body, becauſe I conceived it poſſible for a young Actor, by the Help of Art, to imitate that Debility of Nature to ſuch a Pitch of Exactneſs; but the Wrinkles of his Face, his ſunk Eyes, and his looſe and yellow Cheeks, the moſt certain Marks of a great old Age, were inconteſtable Proofs againſt what they ſaid to me. Notwithſtanding all this I was forced to ſubmit to Truth, becauſe I knew for certain that the Actor, to fit himſelf for the Part of the old Man, ſpent an Hour in dreſſing himſelf, and that with the Aſſiſtance of ſeveral Pencils he diſguiſed his Face ſo nicely, and painted ſo artificially a Part of his Eye-brows and Eye-lids, that at the Diſtance of ſix Paces it was impoſſible not to be deceived. I was deſirous to be a Witneſs of this myſelf, but Pride hindered me; ſo knowing that I muſt be aſhamed, I was ſatisfied with a Confirmation of it from the other Actors. *Mademoiſelle Salle*, among others who then ſhone upon that Stage, confeſſed to me, that the firſt time ſhe ſaw him perform ſhe durſt not go into a Paſſage where he was, fearing leſt ſhe ſhould throw him down ſhould ſhe happen to touch him in paſſing by.

I flatter myſelf that this Digreſſion will not be altogether uſeleſs; it may let us know to what an Exactneſs the *Engliſh* Comedians

carry the Imitation of Nature, and may ſerve for a Proof of all that I have advanced of the Actors on the *Engliſh* Theatre.

Reaſon alone ſketched out the firſt Rules of the Theatre in the *Grecian* Tragedies: *Ariſtotle* eſtabliſhed an Art, and made the Laws for us; the *Latins* adopted them, and Moderns have confirmed them by the Heaps of Poems, by the ſo great Number of Dramas, which the *Italians*, and, ſtill more, the *French* have already, and yet continue to ſupply us inceſſantly with. One therefore can't ſtep aſide from theſe Rules without incurring the Cenſure of the whole World. Otherwiſe nothing can be objected to the *Engliſh* Poets, but their having received a particular Maxim, which differs from thoſe of other Countries, and which does not want its Defenders to ſupport it. In ſuch a general Agreement of Opinions authorized by Good-Senſe, I am perſuaded that the Men of Learning in *England* are ſenſible of the Irregularity of their Stage, and that (like the *Spaniards*) they are the firſt who take Notice of it. Were it permitted to depart from theſe Rules, which Reaſon itſelf hath dictated, the *Engliſh* Theatre would be able to balance in Reputation both the Ancient and the Modern. The Excellence of the *Engliſh* excels all the Beauties which the other Theatres in *Europe* can ſhew us; and if

ſome

ſome time or other the *Engliſh* Poets would ſubmit themſelves to the three Unities of the Theatre, and not expoſe Blood and Murder before the Eyes of the Audience, they would at leaſt partake of that Glory which the other more perfect modern Theatres enjoy.

THE

FLEMISH *and* DUTCH THEATRES.

THE *Flemiſh* and *Dutch* Theatres ought to be conſidered but as one and the ſame, ſince they uſe one common Idiom: For the *Flemiſh* Language being no other than the *Dutch* Tongue corrupted by the Neighbourhood of the *Walloons* and *Picards*, thoſe who have wrote in *Flanders* made Uſe of the *Dutch* Idiom as the nobleſt and fulleſt of Energy, and which approached neareſt to the Mother-Tongue, which is the *German*. They both went under the Name of the *Flemiſh* Theatre, when the two Nations were under the Government of the ſame Maſter, and their Sovereigns reſided in *Flanders*; but ſince the diſmembering of the United Provinces, we muſt ſpeak of them ſeparately. It was from the

the Repreſentations of *Myſteries*, that the Theatre of *Flanders* had its Riſe, as the others had, with this Difference however, that as ſoon as the *French* Nation grew poliſhed, it perceived the Indecency which the Simplicity of theſe firſt *Repreſentations* concealed, and by degrees they gave Place to Shows better underſtood and more regular: But *Flanders* had not had the ſame Advantage, for Theatrical Shows having ceaſed in that Country, the Simplicity, void of all Politeneſs and Taſte, remained in its original State. I could even be tempted to believe, that the *Flemiſh* as well as the *Dutch* took for their Model, at their firſt ſetting out, the *Engliſh* Theatre rather than the *French*, ſeeing that they followed the ſame Method, and did not adopt the *French* Theatre but ſince *Corneille*. At the Time when the *Flemiſh* Theatre might have been brought to Perfection (after the Example of other Nations) their Sovereigns changed the Place of their Reſidence, and ever ſince that Period we may ſay it has ceaſed entirely. They have been now a long time without a Theatre; and all that they preſerve, is the Repreſentation of the *Paſſion*, in the ſame Simplicity and Groſſneſs with which it began, and which is acted at certain Times of the Year by Societies of Burghers, who act alſo ſometimes paltry Tranſlations of *French* Comedies. In ſhort,

we may ſay that ſince the Year 1566, from the Time of the Civil Wars, the *Flemiſh* Theatre has not ſubſiſted: It was not ſo in *Holland*, where it has been cultivated; and I ſhall ſpeak of their Theatre alone, in the Sequel. The *Dutch* Theatre had its Original from what they call in that Country *Reden Ryckers Kameren*, Companies or Societies of Rhetoricians and Poets, who may be compared to the firſt *Troubadours* of *Provence*, as I ſhall ſhew more fully in the Deſcription of the *German* Theatre. Theſe *Companies* took their Origin from the * natural Poetical Genius of the Nation, (which is ſo great, that even their moſt ancient Chronicles are in Verſe) and the Eagerneſs of the People for Shows.

Theſe *Societies* were alſo common in *Brabant:* They had fourteen at *Antwerp*; that of the *Gilli-Flower*, and that of the *Olive-Branch* were the moſt diſtinguiſhed: There were † nineteen at *Ghent*; they had them in *Holland*

* This Genius is ſtill the ſame, but better regulated. If any Perſon of Diſtinction is married, dies, is promoted, &c. the Poets immediately take the Field, and ten, fifteen, or twenty Epithalamiums, Elegies, or Panegyrics appear, all which are printed in the ſame manner as the *Theſes* at *Paris*.

† This may be proved by a Collection of Allegorical Pieces (*Zinneſpel*) repreſented by the nineteen Chambers of *Ghent*,

Holland in almoſt every City, as *Harlem*, *Gouda*, *Schiedam*, *Alcmaar*, *Leyden*, *Ulaerdinge*, *Rotterdam*, ‡ &c. This Cuſtom did not prevail in the Cities alone, but alſo in many Villages. In the Year 1708 they had ſtill one in the Village of *Voorſchootten* near *Leyden*, and another in the Village of *Looſduynen* near the *Hague*; and there is now actually one of them in the great Village of *Waſſenaar* near *Leyden*.

The Members of theſe *Societies* were the Wits of the Place, who were applied to for Epithalamiums, for Elegies, for Panegyrics, or Compliments, when any one was preferred to an Office, as I have ſaid before. The ſame compoſed Theatrical Pieces, which they acted in the *Society-Room* (thus they are entitled *Kamerſpel*, that is, *Society-Plays*) and very often in the Country in the Time of Fairs *(Kermis)* in public upon Scaffolds. Seldom had they any Women;

Ghent, printed in 1539. And by another Collection of fifty Pieces, Allegories, Prologues (Voeorſpel) or Farces (Naſpel) repreſented by the fourteen Chambers of *Anvers*. Printed by *Silvius* at *Anvers* in 1562.

‡ *Konſtoutende Juweel*, or the Jewel of Art, is a Proof of this. It is a Collection of fourteen Allegorical Pieces, compoſed and repreſented by ſeveral Chambers of Orators at *Harlem*, printed at *Zwol* in 1607; and *Ulaerdinge Rederykſberg* (the *Parnaſſus* of *Ulaerdinge*) or a Collection of ſixteen Pieces of the Orators of the Chambers in *Ulaerdinge*, printed in 1617, &c.

men; they were Men who perſonated the Characters. Oftentimes theſe *Reden Rycker*s (Poets) of one Village went to perform their Pieces at the Fair of another Village, which in its Turn did the like to the other; or theſe *Societies* tranſported themſelves in a Body to aſſiſt at certain Feaſts and Repreſentations in another Town or Village; and this they did with Ceremonies, almoſt the ſame with thoſe they obſerve in *France*, when the Companies of the *Arquebuſe* (Gunſmiths) of one Town go to ſhoot for the Prize in another; and ſometimes there were Societies, who even performed from one Town to another, and diſputed the Prize of Wit, and after the Performance was over, the Wits of the Company recited Extempore Pieces, or Madrigals, Sonnets, *&c.* Such was the Origin of the *Dutch* Theatre, of which it would be difficult to fix the Epocha, ſince that poetical Genius, and that Paſſion for Shows, Dancing, and Songs, are as ancient as the Nation itſelf: However it is probable that theſe *Societies* were eſtabliſhed before the *Burgundy* Family reigned in the Country.

The moſt ancient Piece of the *Dutch* Theatre is *De Spiegel der Minne* (the Mirror of Love) by *Colin Van Ryſſele*, printed at *Haerlem* in 1561, in 8vo. In the ancient Tragedies they repreſent the Action juſt as it happened: Thus in the Story of *Egmond* and

and *Horn*, they cut off the Heads of theſe two Earls upon the Stage; in another Piece the Hero ſtabs himſelf, and falls down dead, after having deluged the Stage with the Blood contained in a Bladder which he had under his Arm: *Haman* in his Tragedy is hanged, and *Mordecai* makes the Tour of the Theatre mounted on a *Roſinante*. In *Tamerlane*, that Prince appears on Horſeback with *Bajazet*: In ſhort, in the Death of *Conradin* King of *Naples*, an Officer goes to take him out of his Dungeon, to lead him to the Scaffold, whither he is accompanied by two Prieſts, one habited like a Biſhop, the other like a Cardinal. Another Singularity of their ancient Theatre is, that which they call *Vertoning* (the Repreſentation); they let down the Curtain in the midſt of an Act, and range the Actors upon the Stage, ſo that they repreſent, after the Manner of Pantomimes, ſome principal Action of the Subject. Thus in *Gyſbrecht van Aemſtel*, they lift up the Curtain, and on the Stage are repreſented the Soldiers of *Egmond*, Enemy to *Gyſbrecht*, who ſack a Convent of Nuns, where every Soldier has one, whom he uſes at his Diſcretion: The Abbeſs is ſtretched out in the midſt of the Theatre, holding on her Knees the venerable *Goſwin*, the exiled Biſhop of *Utrecht*, maſſacred in his Pontifical Robes, his Mitre on his Head, and the Croſs in his Hand.

Hand. At the End of the Siege of *Leyden* there are eight or ten living Emblems to repreſent the Weight of the *Spaniſh* Tyranny, the Valour of the *Dutch*, Religion triumphant, Acts re-eſtabliſhed, *&c.* There are upon the Stage upwards of three hundred Perſons, and an Actreſs, with a Wand in her Hand, explains them to the Spectators, who appear aſtoniſhed: We may ſay that really this makes a beautiful Show.

The *Dutch* Spectators, beſides the Maſſacres and Blood, have adopted, and have a Taſte for, the *Marvellous* and *Extraordinary*: For Example, they act a Tragedy, where we ſee a Princeſs who has before her on a Plate her Lover's Head cut off; ſhe ſets herſelf down to write, and addreſſes her Words to the Head, who anſwers her. In another Tragedy, *Circe* deſigning to deſtroy the Confident of *Ulyſſes*, with whom ſhe was diſpleaſed, orders a Proceſs to be begun againſt him: The Criminal is brought before the Court which *Circe* had conſtituted for that Purpoſe: The Lyon is the Preſident, the Monkey the Regiſter, the Wolf, the Fox, and other Animals are Counſellors, and the Bear is the Hangman. They condemn the Confident of *Ulyſſes*, and hang him immediately without letting him go off the Stage: After the Execution, all the Members of him that was hanged, fall Piece by Piece into a Well,

which

which is beneath the Gallows. *Ulyſſes* comes upon the Stage and complains to *Circe*, who, touched at his Grief, makes him that was hanged come forth from the Well alive and entire as he was before. They are very curious about their Machines and their Flights. When a Man is to fly, a Rope is hung down with a Stirrup at the End of it; the Actor puts one Foot in it, takes hold of it with one Hand, and then comes down from the Height of the Theatre.

Their Theatre becomes every Day more exact, and they baniſh all theſe ancient Pieces, excepting ſome few, which are as it were conſecrated by long Cuſtom. For Example, the *Siege of Leyden* is acted every Year on the 3d of *October*, *Gyſbrecht van Aemſtel* on *Chriſtmas-Eve*; and each of theſe Pieces is played every Year five or ſix times running, to ſatisfy the greedy Curioſity of Peaſants, inferior Burghers, old People, Servants, and Children.

From the Year 1561, which is the Epocha of their moſt ancient Comedy, until the Year 1638, the Nation counts forty Poets. He who firſt wrote with any Regularity for the Theatre was *Peter Cornelius Hooft*, Son to a Burgo-Maſter of *Amſterdam*, a learned Man, diſtinguiſhed by the Name which they give him of the *Dutch Tacitus*, Author of a Hiſtory of the Republic, and of the Hiſtory

ſtory of *Henry* IV, which was liked ſo much at that Time, that *Lewis* XIII. ennobled him, and gave him the Order of St. *Michael*. *Hooft* had Talents for Poetry, he was a Member of the Society of *Rhetoricians* at *Amſterdam*. His Hiſtorian *Brandt* remarks that he improved that Society very much; and giving himſelf wholly up to Poetry before he wrote his Hiſtory, he compoſed many Pieces, very regular for that Time. We have of him four Tragedies and three Comedies. The firſt, which is *Achilles and Polyxena*, is dated in the Year 1620; and thus he preceded by above fifteen Years the famous *Vondel*, of whom I ſhall now ſpeak.

Vondel, ſurnamed the *Dutch Virgil and Seneca*, began to write for the Theatre in 1638, when he gave a Tragi-Comedy, intitled *Paſcha*. His Theatrical Pieces are printed in two Volumes 4to. which contain thirty Tragedies; the firſt Volume has ſixteen on ſacred Subjects, and the ſecond fourteen prophane ones, five of which have been corrected ſince the Year 1700, according to the Taſte of the modern Theatre. The *Palamede* of *Vondel* paſſes for a Maſterpiece: It is an allegorical Piece, which couches a Satire on the Stadtholderſhip of Prince *Maurice*, and a Panegyric on *Barnevelt*, whom that Prince brought to the Scaffold,

Scaffold, altho' it was to him he owed all his Dignities.

Before the Reign of *Lewis* XIV. we find in the *Dutch* Theatre very few foreign Pieces imitated, excepting ſome taken from the *Spaniſh*, and which they received from *Brabant*: But ſince they have approved of *Corneille*, *Racine*, and the other celebrated Tragedians, they have tranſlated their good Performances with all the Energy the *Dutch* Tongue is capable of, inſomuch that they ſay confidently in their Country, that they have many Pieces of theſe Authors as good as the Originals, and ſome that exceed them: For their Language, as they pretend, is infinitely more expreſſive of the *Serious and Tragic*, than the *French* Tongue is: They pretend that one *Dutch* Word has more Force in that kind of Writing, than a Period in *French*; but I cannot judge of this, being entirely ignorant of that Language. Their Theatrical Pieces are always in Verſe, and they follow the ſame Rule they do in *France*; they ſeldom write in Blank Verſe. The Tragedies are generally in five Acts, and ſometimes in three. As for the Rhime, I am of Opinion that it is the Nature of their Language which cauſes them to follow Verſification ſo much, for their Rhimes are excellent. Their Verſe rhimes like the *Italian*, always by the two laſt Syllables: This makes

a Harmony ſo juſt and ſo ſonorous, that all thoſe who are able to taſte the *Italian* Poetry aſſure us, that, for the ſame Reaſons, they cannot help being affected with the *Dutch* Rhimes.

However, notwithſtanding theſe Advantages of the Rhime in the *Dutch* Language, I imagine that there is an Inconvenience in it. Before I explain my Thought, I would call to mind the Criticiſm which a *French* Author made, *a propos*, on the *Italian* Language, becauſe it appears to me to be of the ſame Nature with the Remark I have made on the *Dutch* Tongue. The *French* Critic advanced that the greateſt Part of the *Italian* Words ended with an *a* or an *o*, and ſaid that, that continual Monotony rendered the Language very defective. The *Italians* who anſwered him, made him ſenſible, that if he had been but in the leaſt able to ſpeak the *Italian* Language, he would not have advanced ſuch an Obſervation; but that having judged of it only by the Eye, he eaſily fell into the Error *. This probably may be my Caſe, notwithſtanding all the Precautions I have taken. The *Dutch* Poets have

* The Marquis of *Orſi*, in his Letters upon *The Manner of Thinking well*, and Mr. *Muratori* in his *Perfetta poeſia*, furniſh us with as many Inſtances and Examples of this kind as can be deſired.

have imitated the *Alexandrian* Verſe in all its Parts, and I believe that their Language ought not to follow the Quality of the maſculine and feminine Rhimes of the *French* Poetry. It ſeems to me that the *Dutch* feminine Rhime is faulty in the Article of Monotony: It terminates always in the Syllable *en*, and that perpetual Sound appears to me very troubleſome. I know very well that the Pronounciation can diverſify, in ſome meaſure, the Sound of that Syllable *en*, according as it is preceeded by a long, or a ſhort, or a double Vowel, *&c.* but this cannot perſuade me that the Inconvenience of the Monotony does not preſent itſelf continually. I do not underſtand the *Dutch* Language; but after having judged of it by my Eyes, and by Reflection I was willing alſo to judge of it by my Ears: I cauſed a *Dutchman* to pronounce to me ſome Words choſen out of feminine Rhimes, and I perceived that the Syllable *en* ſounded continually in my Ears, notwithſtanding the different Sound that every Word bears; that it never changes its Sound, and that it is always pronounced. They aſſure me, that in familiar Diſcourſe it is ſometimes almoſt mute, or at leaſt ſoftened; but that on the Theatre, and in the Pulpit, they pronounce it always ſtrong.

I make another Reflection: The *French*

have been obliged to eſtabliſh two Rhimes which they have named maſculine and feminine, by the Nature of their Language, the half of whoſe Words terminate in a mute *e*; and I conceive that the *Dutch* Tongue was neceſſitated to the ſame, having alſo half of its Words terminating in *en*. But I obſerve the Advantage which the *French* has over the *Dutch* Tongue: In the one we but very rarely perceive that the feminine Rhimes terminate in *e*; and in the other we hear plainly that they all terminate in *en*. In effect, *Image*, *Jalouſie*, *Chimere*, *Sacrifice*, *Perfide*, *Adore*, *Colere*, &c. and an infinite Number of Words of *French* feminine Rhimes, do not appear to end in *e*, and each has a different Sound. But in the *Dutch* Tongue, theſe Words *Leden*, *Voren*, *Tirannen*, *Wonden*, *Gebroken*, *Zoonen*, *Barbaaren*, and in all the reſt of their feminine Rhimes, the Syllable *en* ſounds continually, and conſequently the Monotony is inevitable. I have had the Curioſity to examine, on this Head, the *Dutch* Tragedy of *The Death of the Prince of Orange*, which is one of the beſt of their Theatre: The firſt Act has 800 Lines, 400 of which are feminine Rhimes; of which there are 324 that terminate in the Syllable *en*; and twenty that have a different Termination; and this confirms to me, that the Diſpoſition of their

Language

Language is not at all lucky, in regard to this Article, of the feminine Rhimes they have adopted; perhaps indeed they cannot diſpoſe any otherwiſe, but they never fail to be a remarkable Inconvenience *.

Their Theatre now becomes every Day more exact: They have baniſhed all the ancient Pieces, and act none but new ones, which make their Theatre entirely of a *French* Taſte. Generally they perform a Tragedy or a Comedy of five Acts, followed by a ſmall Piece which they call *Klugtſpel*. Many of theſe they have tranſlated from *D'Ancourt* and *Le Grand*, and other *French* Authors; but thoſe which are in the natural Taſte of the Country, infinitely exceed the foreign Pieces; beſides that, the Authors are ignorant of the Spirit of the *French* Performances, which renders theſe Tranſlations very inſipid: But they perform Wonders in

* The *Dutch* and *Germans* are the only Nations who have imitated the *French* in making Uſe of Rhime in Tragedy and Comedy. The *Italians* and the *Engliſh* have never put them into Rhime; and if the *Spaniards* have ſometimes done it, they have put the Rhimes correſponding to one another at a conſiderable Diſtance, and by that Means avoided the diſagreeable Monotony of the *Alexandrine* Verſe. I don't think however, that they are to be followed as Models in that Particular.

From this Note of our Author's it is plain that there are a great many Engliſh *Dramatic Performances, which never came to his Hands, and which he never heard of.*

Tragedy, which they recite nobly and naturally, the *Dutch* being generally averſe to the Tragic Declamation of the *French* Theatre, which they regard as a Rant foreign to Nature.

The Play-houſes of *Amſterdam*, of the *Hague*, and of *Leyden*, have had good Authors †; but they have but few ſo good Actreſſes, as Madam *Benjamine*, &c. They ſay that they would yet have better Actors and Actreſſes, if they were paid as in *France*; for there are great Numbers who have the Gifts of the Theatre, Memory, Taſte, Preſence, and good Speech; but their ‡ beſt Performers have not above 600 Florins a Year; ſo that, not being able to live by the Theatre alone, they all have Trades. *Punt* is an excellent Engraver. *Duym* is a Bookſeller, *&c.*. Beſides this, their Players muſt be ſober and modeſt, becauſe being almoſt all Burgers and Burgers Wives, they would be aſhamed to appear upon the Stage with an Actor whoſe Virtue was ſuſpected: On this Account the Managers of their Theatres, who are eight Perſons of Diſtinction, were obliged

† *Van Sermes, Ryndorp, Noſeman, Brinkhuyſe, Benjamin Koning, Jan Tambour, Vander Sluys. Bor, Boekhurſt, Vander Ramp, Duym, Punt,* have diſtinguiſhed themſelves.

‡ *Benjamine Brinkhuyſe, Noſeman, Rigo, Waebtendorp, Bor, Duym, Jordaan, Maze.*

obliged to diſmiſs their beſt Actreſs, becauſe an Accident which had happened to her, hindered her Companions to perform along with her: However, ſome Time after ſhe was readmitted.

Their Play-houſes are a Demi-oval, of which, the Side of the Stage makes the ſmall Diameter: Near to the Stage is the Orcheſtre, conſiſting at the moſt of two Bands of Muſicians: Behind this, two Thirds of the Space form what they call *Bac*, which is a Pit with Benches covered with Cuſhions or Carpets: The other Third-part, which is about two or three Foot higher, is a Place where they ſtand up: There is, all round the Room, a Row of Boxes which are higher than the loweſt Part of the Stage by five or ſix Feet. At *Amſterdam* there is a ſecond Row of Boxes, in form of an Amphitheatre.

They pay Twenty-pence for the Pit, Thirty-pence for the Boxes, for the Standing-Places Six-pence, and for the Amphitheatre above (where there is one) Ten-pence. The Revenue of the Theatre, (Actors paid, and all Expences defray'd) is ſet aſide for the Support of two Hoſpitals, which have ſometimes from twenty to five and twenty thouſand Florins a Year. In all the other Cities, the Performance is carried on with Tranquillity enough: As between the Acts they lower the

Curtain in order to ſnuff the Candles, the meaner Sort of People take that Opportunity to drink, taking Care to bring a Stock along with them; but at *Amſterdam*, where the People are more forward and impudent, the Amphitheatre, above the firſt Boxes, is very troubleſome: They talk there very loud, they call to one another from one End to the other; they crack Nuts during the whole Performance; they are perpetually throwing Bottles up and down between Acts, inſomuch that they make a terrible Noiſe, which is very diſagreeable. If the Actors diſpleaſe the Amphitheatre, they plague them; they call them Nick-names, and cry aloud to them to retire, or to hold their Peace, *&c.* Their Play-houſes are well illuminated: Beſides five or ſix Sconces which hang from the Middle down on the Edge of the Stage, there are generally between the Boxes Branched-Candleſticks with Lights in them. They boaſt extremely of the Theatre of *Amſterdam*, and it is current in theſe Parts, that it is one of the moſt beautiful in *Europe*; but this I can't affirm for Truth, becauſe I never ſaw it: It is of great Extent both in Length and Breadth: Its Decorations are magnificent: There is a Gallery of the famous *Laireſſe*, which is a Maſter-piece; and a Saloon of *Trooſt*, which is grand.

I muſt obſerve that their Taſte for Poetry

is

is not at all diminiſhed, altho' the *Reden-Rycker-Kamers* do not ſubſiſt any more: They have ſubſtituted in their room Poetical-Societies, and diſtinguiſhed every one by a Device. They count in *Amſterdam* ſo many as thirty, the moſt ancient of which have for Devices, the one *In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt*; and the other, *Latet quoq; utilitas.* Theſe two Societies, from the Year 1680 to 1698, have produced twenty four Pieces. Another, which has for its Motto, *Nil volentibus arduum*, has given twenty ſix from the Year 1704 to 1717: That which has for its Device, *L' Application fait fleurir les Arts*, has produced twenty five Pieces from 1700 to 1718, inſomuch that the Collection of the Theatrical Pieces of theſe Societies amounts to near two hundred.

The Catalogue of the Pieces of the *Dutch* Theatre printed in the Year 1727, contains two hundred ſixty eight Authors, thirty Societies, and four hundred ninety eight Tragedies, three hundred ſeventy one Comedies, ſeventy ſix Tragi-Comedies, twenty three Paſtorals, two hundred ſeventy Farces, and eight Operas, which make in all one thouſand two hundred forty ſix Theatrical Pieces. As for Habits, they have followed the Taſte of the Times: At preſent they uſe the ſame they do at *Paris*, excepting this, that their *Roman* Habits are with Helmets, which are

yet better than Hats: The Oriental Pieces are performed in a long Dreſs, like the *Turkiſh*; the reſt in Dreſſes according to the Faſhion: The whole is magnificent, and the *Roman* Habits are embroidered curiouſly: Their Warehouſe furniſhes all.

The principal Actors are at preſent Mr. *Duym*, whom they call their *Baron*, and *Punt*, their *Quinault*. Madams *Maze* and *Bruyn*, and ſome young People who form themſelves on the Inſtructions of the old *Bor*, who will become, as they hope, excellent Actors.

THE GERMAN THEATRE.

ALL the Capital Cities of *Europe* have applied themſelves earneſtly to revive Shows. In effect, as ſoon as Tragedy and Comedy appeared ſince the Time of the *Romans*, we may obſerve, that the ſeveral Nations took but little Time after one another, in re-eſtabliſhing their Theatres. In Truth, the *German* Theatre has been the lateſt; and for this Reaſon it is, that it is eaſier to trace its Origin and Progreſs, than of the others.

Ancient *Germany* has its *Bards*, who in Quality of Poets compoſed and ſung the Elogies of their Heroes. Hence it is that the Word *Bar* comes, which ſignifies a *Song*. Since *Charlemagne*, we have ſeen ſucceed to theſe *Bards* another kind of Poets, called *Maſter-Langer*, that is to ſay *Maſter-Singers*, who

who may be ſix hundred Years ſtanding. They bring all ſort of Proofs to evince that they were famous even in the Days of *Otho* the Great, who had given them conſiderable Privileges, confirmed by his Succeſſors, eſpecially *Maximilian* I. Different Societies and Clubs of theſe *Maſter-Singers* were formed in the principal Cities of *Germany*; at *Mentz*, *Straſbourg*, *Nurembourg*, and *Augſbourg*. They had a Right to write Poetry at Tournaments, public Meetings, and other ſolemn Ceremonies. That at *Straſbourg* is actually ſubſiſting yet, and enjoys certain Revenues, eſtabliſhed many Ages ago in favour of this Company; which is compoſed of Tradeſmen, Workmen, Taylors, Shoemakers, Weavers, Millers, *&c.* who perform in a conſpicuous Place, or a common Hall of Tradeſmen, publickly at certain Times in the Year, having their old and their chief Men, who are Judges of the Verſification and Song, and who diſtribute the inſtituted Prize, according to their Rules and Cuſtoms; theſe ignorant Workmen, who have no Notion of Poetry, nor of the Rules of Muſic, give beſides ſometimes an Entertainment to amuſe the By-ſtanders.

It is from theſe *Singers* that we muſt draw the Origin of the *German* Theatre; but they did not apply to this till late, giving themſelves up generally to compoſe Verſes on Subjects

jects taken from ſacred and prophane Hiſtory, which they recite in their public Room. The *Royal Song* of the *French*, under the Reign of *Charles* about the Year 1370, of which we have ſpoken in its proper Place, has all the Appearance of being the ſame thing. I would not undertake to ſearch and determine which Nation firſt ſung Verſes on Paſſages of Hiſtory; any learned Man, who is curious about it, may decide it; but as for me, I neglect that Search, as a Thing which is not at all neceſſary to my Subject.

Before the fifteenth Age, we find no Signs of Shows repreſented by theſe *German Singers*. About the Middle of the ſixteenth Age they were frequent, eſpecially at *Nuremburgh*, where a Shoemaker named *Haanſſachs*, who was not without a Genius, had compoſed many *German* Dramatic Pieces, of which there are ſeveral Volumes in Folio and Quarto, without reckoning the Manuſcripts which are yet extant in great Number. The Author performed them himſelf in public Houſes, where theſe Tradeſmen had their common Meetings. Theſe firſt Dramatic Pieces were taken moſtly from ſacred Hiſtory, like thoſe which they had ſeen at that Time in *France*, where they had appeared an Age before.

It ſeems that they acted them *gratis*, or at leaſt their Recompence was but trifling: They

They alſo have made them on purpoſe, to amuſe or inſtruct their Princes. *Maſſenius* tells us, that they had one which hinted at the Affairs of Religion in theſe Times, and that this was to ſhew to *Charles* V. the Faults which he had committed. Some Bodies of Tradeſmen in the great Towns of *Germany* making ſometimes ſolemn Proceſſions, had a Cuſtom, from Time immemorial, to act Comedies and Farces. By degrees was introduced alſo into public Schools the Cuſtom of Shows, but generally in the *Latin* Tongue. You will find at the End of my Book a ſmall Catalogue of certain *German* Theatrical Pieces, compoſed originally in that Language; for they have a great many *French* ones, and many ancient *Latin* ones, which have been tranſlated into *German* by different Authors at different Times.

From the Year 1516 to 1628 or 30, their ſacred and profane Tragedies were but wretched; and during that Time the inſipid Comedies of *Hannſſachs*, and the other *Maſter-Singers*, who wrote in his Manner, poſſeſſed the *German* Theatre. In the Year 1626 a Company of *Dutch* Players went to *Hamburgh*, and the *German* Theatre altered its Manner, by borrowing from them the Models of a better Drama both in Tragedy and Comedy. About the Year 1627 or 28, a Company of Players was formed, which gave

gave Riſe to many others; and theſe writing Plays in the Taſte of the *Dutch*, by degrees deſtroyed the Theatre of the *Maſter-Singers*, by turning them into Burleſque and Ridicule. Towards the Year 1630, or at moſt 35, the *German* Theatre was in its Perfection; and then their Poets wrote regular Tragedies and Comedies in a correct Verſification, as I ſhall ſhew, after I have given the Reader a general Notion of this Theatre.

The Players however ſtill retained their *Dutch* Taſte of the Drama, and intermixt true Tragedy with their ordinary Plays, which in the main were as wretched as the *Drama* of the *Singers*. Since the Year 1680, the *German* Players being inſtructed by the *Italian* Companies which were invited to *German* Courts, attempted to play Extempore Comedies; theſe *Italians* gave them the Ground-plat, and theſe were pirated in Writing during the Repreſentation.

At preſent the *German* Drama is compoſed of good Tragedies and Comedies; of Plays written in the firſt Taſte of the *Dutch*; of great Numbers tranſlated; and of the *Italian* Comedies adapted to their Idiom, and played *extempore*.

We muſt obſerve that the *Germans* are the only People in *Europe* who, in Imitation of the *Italians*, have attempted to act *extempore*: I don't know however if they ought

ought to boaſt much of their Succeſs; for tho' their Theatre were perfect, this Method of *extempore* is enough to debauch and ruin it. The true *Italian* Drama, wrote and played in Academies about the Year 1500, was a Reformation of the Hireling Comedy which many Ages before was played *extempore*, as we have ſeen above. But the *Germans* having begun their Drama by written, tho' wretched, Tragedies and Comedies, and their Theatre being afterwards poliſhed into a better Taſte, there is great Reaſon to fear that the *extempore* Manner, which has been ſince introduced, may occaſion the entire Ruin of the *German* Theatre.

The firſt Company that was formed in *Germany* after the Year 1626, was compoſed of young Students of good Families, and their Chief was one *Charles Paul*, the Son of a Lieutenant-Colonel. Theſe were ſoon followed by others, who, like them, choſe their Actors from among the Students of the beſt Education and Families. The Head of the fourth Company, which was formed during the Infancy of their Theatre, was *John Velten*, a Profeſſor of Philoſophy, and Son to the Profeſſor of Divinity in the Univerſity of *Jena* in *Saxony*. This able Player choſe his Company from among the Flower of the noble Scholars of *Jena* and *Leipſic* in *Saxony*. He wrote Tragedies of his own Invention.

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The Elector of *Saxony* took them all into his Service, where they ended their Days in great Esteem. The other Companies which succeeded, kept up the great Reputation of their Predeceſſors; ſome of them by their Talents and Birth have been honoured with the Laurel, and declared Poets-Laureat by the Emperor; ſome of them, having left the Stage, attained to great Dignities in the Church, and to other Poſts of Power and Profit, which they could not have filled, had there not met in their Perſons the higheſt Quality with the moſt diſtinguiſhed Capacity. Some of theſe Gentlemen ſtill live in great Employments, tho' it may not be decent to name them, becauſe in our Days the Profeſſion of a Player in all Countries is a Blemiſh upon his natural Accompliſhments.

The *German* Tragedies and Comedies, which originally were no other than Imitations of the *Dutch*, have to this Day preſerved the Gloomineſs of their original Models. I ſhall not mention the Puniſhments nor the Torments of Martyrs, nor the Racks of *Ruffians*, it is enough to ſay that they never fail to bring them all upon the Stage. In their Tragedies are commonly heard horrible Voices; Spectres and Phantoms are ſeen with bloody Swords in their Hands, or ſticking in their Breaſts, together with black flaming

ing Torches, Tombs, and every Object that can moſt effectually excite Terror.

As I obſerved before, about a hundred Years ago, they attempted firſt to chaſtiſe and reform their Theatre upon the Models of Antiquity; to obſerve Rules, to write in a correct Stile, elegant and ſublime at the ſame time, to poliſh their Rhimes and Numbers, ſo as to give their Plays their juſteſt Perfection and trueſt Beauty. The *Sileſians* had the Honour to be the firſt who cultivated this barren Spot. *John Opitz*, *Andrew Gryphius*, and *Gaſper de Lohenſtein*, are the three moſt able *German* Poets who have given the greateſt Beauty both to the Poetry and Stage of their Country. The firſt of theſe has wrote a *German* Proſody, where he lays down for his Countrymen excellent Rules for the Drama. The Dramatic Compoſitions of theſe Authors, which are almoſt all Tragedies, eſpecially *Gryphius* who is the *Corneille* of *Germany*, have merited the Eſteem of the Public, and their Reputation continues to this Day. The *Saxons* have only followed or imitated theſe with regard either to *Taſte*, Purity, or Elegance of Stile, or the Force of Expreſſion. No *German* Poet ſince the Time of *Gryphius* has preſumed to diſpute with him the firſt Place in Tragedy. He was likewiſe Author of ſome very pretty diverting Farces, which contained a very

very fine and agreeable Ridicule upon the Comedies that had till then been played by the Singers whom we have already mentioned, and by the Strollers of thoſe Days.

At preſent they have no Poets who attempt to give the Public any original Compoſitions in their manner; they having adopted the Dramatic Compoſitions of *foreign* Theatres to their own. Some time ſince, they began to tranſlate from the *French* Theatre, then from the *Spaniſh*, the *Italian*, the *Engliſh*, &c. without however leaving out their old *Pieces*, which ſtill are the Ground-work of their Drama, tho' very wretched Stuff. If any Pieces in a quite new Manner appeared, whether Tranſlations or Imitations, they for the moſt part never ſold one Impreſſion; the Reaſon of this is ſingular and worthy to be accounted for.

In all their Companies there are Poets who write Plays. If any Poet who is *foreign* to their Profeſſion ſhall offer them a Play, he expects no Copy-Money, nor any Reward, but makes a Preſent of it to ſome Actor or Actreſs; and the Proprietor enjoys all the Profits of the Author, or a certain Sum which is agreed to be paid by the Company every time it is acted, tho' it run for an Age; and thus a Play is as it were an Eſtate entailed, which goes by Deſcent in a Family. It is the ſame with the Pieces of their *Acting*

Authors: But as ſoon as one of their Pieces appears in Print, the Company immediately make themſelves Maſters of it, and give no future Conſideration to the Player, who is either Proprietor or Author. For this Reaſon moſt of their new Pieces are only known by their being acted, and never appear in Print. Intereſt prevents the Acting Authors or Proprietors from reliſhing the Benefit which the Public muſt receive from ſeeing theſe Performances in Print, ſince it muſt thereby be enabled to judge of the Progreſs or Declenſion of their Stage, which would not fail to give Riſe to Diſſertations and Criticiſms always productive of good Effects, either by confirming the Public in their Taſte when good, or expoſing it when bad.

I am ſenſible that on the other hand a great many People, eſpecially Players, approve of this Method, becauſe they know that as ſoon as a Piece is in Print their Houſes grow very thin, and the Curioſity of the Public abates by reading it. When the Pieces are not printed, they ſtill have Novelty to recommend them; and after a ten Years Interminſſion of repreſenting them, the Curioſity of the Public will make as crowded a Houſe, as on the firſt Night of their Repreſentation. Could the Poetical Inheritance at *Paris* be brought under the like Regulation, it would be of vaſt Advantage to the Players, eſpecially

cially as the Authors are to have no Conſideration whatſoever; but few Poets write for bare Glory, and moſt of them want to make a Penny of their Works. For my own Part I own that I am a great Stickler for an Author's being paid, for ſometimes the Sweets of the Gain engage Perſons who excel in the Drama, to draw their Pens in that Species of Writing, who perhaps otherwiſe never would have dreamed of commencing Authors. If this Practice of rewarding Authors was introduced by Players, the State is very much obliged to them, for it has produced many illuſtrious Authors who have done Honour to the *French* Nation.

With regard to the Repreſentation of Holy Myſteries upon the Stage, it is not above thirty Years ſince the Paſſion of our Lord was repreſented at *Vienna* in *Auſtria*, but prohibited afterwards by the Predeceſſor of the preſent Archbiſhop on account of the Indecencies and Profaneneſs introduced by the Actors in the Repreſentation. In the Exhibition of this Piece, which conſiſted of five Acts, we ſaw the Terreſtial Paradice, the Creation of *Adam* and *Eve*, their Fall, the Death of *Abel*, *Moſes* in the Deſart, the Travels of *Mary*, *Joſeph*, and the Child *Jeſus* into *Ægypt*, which laſt, by the bye, is repreſented in the Habit of a full-grown Lad, and is fed with Spoon-meat upon the Stage.

We then ſee the Diſputation of *Chriſt* with the Elders in the Temple; his Prayer in the Garden; his Seizing; all his Paſſion; his Death upon the Croſs, and his Burial, which cloſes the Repreſentation. Other Repreſentations of the Paſſion are more agreeable to the Rules of Good-Senſe; but this is moſt frequently exhibited, it being, by reaſon of its ſingular Decorations, the favourite Entertainment of the Public.

At *Vienna*, and all the Courts of the *German* Princes, as well as the principal Cities of the Empire, their Halls are magnificent, built by *Italian* Architects, and embelliſhed by *Italian* Painters; as to the Expences of ſeeing a Play, they are pretty much upon the ſame Footing as in *France*.

At *Hamburgh* there is an Opera where they ſing in the *Italian* Manner, which is generally followed and practiſed all over *Germany*: The Recitative is in their own Language, but the Airs generally in the *Italian*: They have three different Operas in one Week. I don't know if the Muſicians in the Opera at *Hamburgh* are upon the ſame Regulations they were forty Years ago; but I am aſſured that they are all Tradeſmen or Handicrafts; and your Shoemaker was often the firſt Performer on the Stage; and you might have bought Confections and Fruits from the ſame Girls whom the Night before

you

you ſaw in the Character of *Armida* or *Semiramis*. But I am perſuaded, that in Imitation of the other People of *Europe* they have exalted this Entertainment.

There are ſix *German* Companies of Comedians, whereof *Sweden* has one, *Livonia* another, and the reſt ſtroll about as they pleaſe from Town to Town. Moſt of the *German* Courts have *French* Companies, ſometimes *Italian*, whom they hire to reſide with them; and they have likewiſe Operas which coſt them prodigious Sums. At *Vienna* in *Auſtria* there is every Year an Opera, becauſe all the Emperor's Band of Muſic are *Italians*; whence we may readily infer, that the *German* Company of Players are not very well received over that Country.

In reflecting upon the Manners of all the Theatres we have as yet deſcribed, we may I believe reaſonably preſume, that all of them, more or leſs, fall ſhort of that Severity of Manners and Diction which Men of Virtue require, and that there is great room for a Reformation. The Cities of *Rome* and *Paris* have given very ſtrong Proofs of the Deſire which their Governments have to put their Stages on a better Footing in this reſpect.

Lewis XIV. ordered that every new Play before it was acted ſhould be approved and ſigned by the Lieutenant-General of the Police. This is a very wiſe Inſtitution, and

ſeems calculated to put it out of the Power of any Poet to exhibit to the Public any thing that is lewd or ſcandalous, in which Caſe tho' a Prohibition might be put upon it from appearing ever after, and the Impreſſion might be ſtifled, yet ſtill that could not prevent Modeſty's receiving ſome Shock by the firſt Repreſentation. But by a ſevere Examination of Dramatic Performances, Religion, Morals, and Politics are always ſafe.

At *Rome* the ſame End is ſought after by quite different Means. The *Italian* Theatre is no longer in the Taſte of their Anceſtors; the Extempore Comedy remains Miſtreſs in the Field, which their Dramatic Poets in the Year 1500 had ſeized upon, by introducing the Method of acting Tragedies and Comedies written in Verſe and Proſe. The *Italian* Theatre therefore depends upon ancient and modern Sketches which are impoſſible to be criticiſed; for the moſt exact and the chaſteſt Outlines may produce a very ſcandalous Comedy, eſpecially if the maſqued Actors are not People of Virtue. The Liberty of ſpeaking whatever comes uppermoſt may ſometimes ſeduce the moſt cautious Players; Criticiſm would therefore be uſeleſs; for that Reaſon perhaps at *Rome* theſe Pieces paſs no Examination: They therefore go another way to work. They have taken Care to put a kind of Interdict upon Women's going to the

the Play-houſe, as being moſt liable to be corrupted; and under the Pontificate of *Innocent* XI. they were prohibited both the Comedy and the Opera.

The Women, even ſuppoſing them to be wiſe, might be a Nuſance upon the Stage. This Inconveniency is prevented ſo far as regards the City of *Rome*; but it can't be ſaid that this Reformation alone has extended to all the Stages in *Italy*. I don't know but the different Methods of *Rome* and *Paris* joined together, might have the deſigned Effect.

An Extract *from the* GERMAN.

BEFORE I proceed to the Extract I propoſe, I muſt explain my Motives of giving it. A *German* Tragedy happened to fall into my Hands with a long Preface, and at the End was annex'd a *Critique*, with an Anſwer. Tho' I don't underſtand that Language, yet in running this Performance over with my Eye, I could perceive the Names of a great many *French* Authors mentioned, and therefore was curious to know what was the Author's Meaning. I therefore put the Tragedy into the Hands of a Perſon who made an Extract from it, and I believed it would be no diſagreeable Entertainment to

the Public to communicate to it what the Author has ſaid in this Preface; for beſides that it gives us an excellent and indiſputable Notion of their Stage, I don't think his Ideas in Writing at all contemptible. His Preface, his Criticiſms, and his Anſwers to them, will enable us to judge of the Manner of Thinking which Men of Learning in *Germany* entertain of the Stage, and may perhaps diſabuſe a great Number of People, who think that in that Country they have neither the Practice, the Knowledge, or a Taſte of Dramatic Poetry.

EXTRACT.

The Death of CATO, *by* JOHN CHRISTOPHER GOTTSEHED, *a Tragedy, with the Sentiments of Mr.* de Fenelon *on Tragedy; to which are added a Critique, and an Anſwer; the* Second Edition, *printed at* Leipſic *in the Year* 1735.

The PREFACE.

I INTEND to publiſh a Tragedy in Verſe, when ſuch Pieces after being forgot for more than thirty Years, have juſt renewed

newed their Appearance upon our Theatre. Three Years ago, in my *Treatiſe upon Criticiſm*, I did my beſt to encourage our Nation to cultivate Dramatic Poetry, but I would not venture upon an Attempt of that kind myſelf, for fear of preventing others by my Example. I waited with Impatience to ſee whether any of our Poets would undertake this Taſk for the Honour of *Germany*. It muſt be owned that we don't want great Geniuses, who ſeem to have a Talent for Dramatic Poetry, provided they knew its Rules, with the Faults and the Beauties of the *German* Theatre, and thoſe of *France*, *England*, and *Italy*.

Before I acquaint the Reader with my Motive for publiſhing this Tragedy, it will be neceſſary to inform him, what gave me ſo ſtrong a Bent to the Drama, and prevailed with me to write in that way.

Fifteen or ſixteen Years ago, I read one of the Tragedies of *Lohenſtein* *, which gave me a very odd Notion of Tragedy. Tho' I heard that Poet highly extolled by People of Taſte, I could never reliſh the Beauties of his Works, but durſt not frankly declare my Sentiments. I was equally diſtaſted with *The Antigona of Sophocles*, tranſlated into the *Ger-*

* This Poet has wrote five Tragedies. See the Catalogue at the End.

German Language by *Opitz*†; and tho' I highly reliſhed the other Productions of that Father of our Poetry, yet I could not endure the Harſhneſs of this Tranſlation, which likewiſe to me appeared a little forced and unnatural. Thus I remained in a kind of Indifference, or even Ignorance, with regard to the Drama, till the Works of *Boileau* fell into my Hands. The Satire addreſſed to *Moliere*, and the Encomiums and Criticiſms upon Dramatic Works, with which it is interſperſed, excited my Curioſity to know the reſt of that Author's Pieces. I read the Works of *Moliere*, which gave me a ſtrong Inclination to ſee ſome Tragedy or Comedy acted. In the Year 1724, I found at *Leipſic* the privileged Company of Comedians belonging to the Court of *Saxony*, who come up thither only in the Time of the Fair. Here I had an Opportunity of ſatisfying my Curioſity; I ſaw every Play, but I ſoon perceived that little Regularity was obſerved on that Theatre; for they repreſented great Actions of Kings and Affairs of State intermingled with the Tricks of *Harlequin*, romantic Adventures, Farces, and Buffoonries. The only good Piece acted there, was *The Combat of Honour and Love*; or, *Roderigue and Chimene*, tranſlated into blank Verſe.

† *Opitz* has wrote four Tragedies.

Verſe. It is eaſy to conceive that this Piece not only pleaſed me more than the other Plays, but likewiſe made me ſenſible of the vaſt Difference between a regular Tragedy, and the Exhibition of that fantaſtical Medley I have juſt now mentioned.

I became acquainted with the then Maſter of the Company. I talked to him of a better Order upon his Theatre. I aſked him eſpecially why he did not act the Tragedies of *Griphius*, as alſo his *Horribilicribrifax* *. He anſwered me, that he had formerly play'd the firſt of his Tragedies, but that at preſent ſuch Pieees did not take, becauſe they were too ſerious, and had no comical Characters in them. I adviſed him to try a new Piece in Verſe, and promiſed to write it myſelf. Thus, tho' entirely ignorant of the Rules, nay, tho' I knew not ſo much as whether there were any Rules to be obſerved in Performances of this Nature, I tranſlated the *Endymion* of *Fontenelle*, which I cauſed to be printed with the Addition of ſome comical Scenes that made up a kind of Interlude, entirely independent of the principal Action. By good Fortune I did not then venture to ſhew my Tranſlation, for *Endymion* was more ſuited to the Nature of an Opera †, than of a Comedy.

* See the ſmall Catalogue at the End.

† *Endymion* itſelf is in reality an Opera.

In

In these Days, the bad Pieces which I saw acted, occasioned me to make several Reflections; and tho' I was ignorant of the Rules, I did not find in them that easy Turn, and strict Imitation of Nature, which is the peculiar Beauty, and the chief Perfection of Dramatic Performances; I became solicitous and uneasy, to know the Rules of the Drama, for I could not imagine that a Piece of Poetry, so grand and august, could subsist without Rules, since I observed that all the other kinds of Poetry had stated ones peculiar to themselves. But I have met with none of them in our Writers, except in *Rothen*'s *Description of German Poetry*, printed at *Leipsic*, in the Year 1688.

Menantes, in his Dramatic *Poetry*, gives but little Insight and imperfect Directions with regard to the *Operas*. Tho' *Rothen*'s Thoughts upon this Subject are none of the worst, yet, instead of giving me full Satisfaction, he only opened my Eyes to a new Light, by the Encomiums he bestowed upon *Aristotle*'s *Art of Poetry*. By means of these uncommon Applauses given it by this Writer, my Curiosity led me to read it, which I did for the first time, in Mr. *Dacier*'s *French* Translation. *Causabon on the Satyr of the Greeks*, *Rappolts Aristotle*'s *Art of Poetry*, *Heinsius de Tragediæ Constitutione*, *The Abbot Aubignac*'s *Practice of the Theatre*, and other

Writers

Writers amongſt the Moderns, gave me all the Satisfaction I could wiſh for. My reading the Dramas of *Corneille*, *Racine*, *Moliere*, *La Mothe Danchet*, and *Voltaire*, together with their *Prefaces*, and the critical Diſſertations ſubjoined, contributed not a little to my Information. But the Authors to whom I was more obliged than to all the reſt were *Father Brumoy*, *in his Theatre of the Greeks*, and *Riccoboni in his Italian Theatre.*

The more I knew of the Regulations of foreign Theatres, the more I was diſguſted at the Diſorder and Confuſion of the *German* Stage; but it happened that the Comedians of the Court of *Dreſden* changed their Maſter, whoſe Succeſſor, as well as his Wife, (who has a fine Genius for the Stage, and equals the moſt accompliſhed Actreſs either of *France* or *England*) had a ſtrong Inclination to aboliſh the wild Confuſion which had till then debaſed our Theatre, and to put the *German* Stage on the ſame Footing with that of the *French*. Long before this, while he was at the Court of *Brunſwick*, Attempts had been made to tranſlate the beſt *French* Tragedies into *German* Verſe, and Copies of a great many of them ſent to him for effectuating the ſame Purpoſe. And tho' they begun with the *Regulus of Pradon*, who was none of the beſt Writers of *French* Tragedy, and tranſlated very harſhly by *Breſſand*, a

Poet

Poet reſiding at the Court of that Prince, yet it had ſuch a Run that they were thereby encouraged to act *Brutus* and *Alexander*, tranſlated by the ſame Hand. Some Time after *the Cid of Corneille* appeared, tranſlated by a better Hand, and met with greater Applauſes than any of the Pieces formerly played.

That I might contribute all I could to the Reformation of our Theatre, I propoſed to act *Cinna*, tranſlated by a Perſon of Diſtinction, a Member of the Counſel of *Nuremberg*. This Maſterpiece of *Corneille* is in the Collection entitled *Veſta and Flora*, and met with the Succeſs it deſerved. At laſt I myſelf tranſlated *the Iphiginia of Racine*; and two of my Friends tranſlated the ſecond Part of the *Cid*, called the *Mourning*, *or Mourning Year of Chimene*, and *Racine's Bernice*, which were all three acted with Applauſe; thus we had even at that Time eight regular Tragedies acted upon our Theatre.

After having given this ſhort Account of the Riſe to a Reformation on our Theatre, it is neceſſary I ſhould ſpeak of my own *Cato*, and give a particular Account of its Nature and Conduct.

Cato of *Utica*, has in all Ages of the World been looked upon as the Pattern of Stoical Reſolution, as a thorough Patriot, and a true Republican. Poets and Orators, Hiſtorians

ſtorians and Philoſophers, have celebrated him in their Works; and even under the Deſpotic Government of the *Roman* Emperors who ſucceeded *Cæſar*, the greateſt Men praiſed his Zeal and Warmth in defending the Republic. *Virgil and Horace*, under the Reign of *Auguſtus*, *Lucan* and *Seneca*, under that of *Claudius* and *Nero*, have ſung his Praiſes. The Poet *Maternus* (as we ſee by that ancient Dialogue of the Orators upon the Cauſe of the Decay of Eloquence) wrote a Tragedy on *Cato*; and that Poet in all probability expreſſed his Averſion to Monarchy in Terms ſo full of Strength and Force, that his Friends thought the Piece not only too ſarcaſtical, but even dangerous; a Circumſtance which gives us ſufficient Light with regard to the Original of that Poem.

Cato killed himſelf in *Utica*, and this Cataſtrophe has rendered the Action a fit Subject for a Tragedy; it is then no Wonder that the Poets of all Nations have made Choice of it for that Purpoſe.

In the Year 1712 Mr. *Addiſon*, an *Engliſh* Poet, publiſhed his *Cato*; it is impoſſible to conceive how highly this Piece was valued by the *Engliſh*, and perhaps their Love of Liberty contributed not a little to its Succeſs. It is however certain that this Tragedy contains ſo many real Beauties, that it muſt pleaſe not only the *Engliſh*, but all other

other Spectators: In it the Characters and Manners are ſtrictly preſerved, and the Thoughts are ſuited to the different Turn and Genius of the Perſonages introduced. *Cato* is repreſented as a thorough Republican: But this Tragedy having already met with ſufficient Applauſe on the Continent, eſpecially in a Tranſlation of it into *French* Proſe, needs no Encomiums from me.

Soon after Mr. *Deſchamps* publiſhed his *Cato*, which was printed at the *Hague* in the Year 1715. I don't believe that that Poet knew any thing of Mr. *Addiſon*'s Tragedy, for the two do not reſemble one another in their Conduct; the Table, the Perſonages, and the Incidents are quite different. And in the *Engliſh Cato* even Facts and Incidents are handled in a quite different Manner. The Character of *Cato* is indeed the ſame in both, and perfectly, equally, and well ſuſtained; excepting when he is killed, and thro' all the fifth Act, for as I ſhall prove, the *Engliſh Cato* has ſomething excellent in this Circumſtance to balance the Merit of the *French*, which indeed is preferable in Point of Regularity.

If the Subject of *Sophoniſba* has been handled by the *Italians*, the *French*, the *Engliſh*, and the *Germans*, it is not ſurprizing if that of *Cato* has had the ſame Fate; but I am ſorry that it falls to my Weakneſs to undertake

undertake this Subject in the *German* Language. But conſcious of my Inability to plan out the Action of a Fable, I have made Uſe of the two Originals juſt now mentioned, ſo that one may ſay of me what on another Occaſion was ſaid of *Terence*.

Quæ convenere in Andriam ex Perinthia,
Fatetur tranſtuliſſe, atq; Uſum pro ſuis.

Who confeſſed, "That he took from *Perin-*
"*thia*, and uſed as his own, ſuch Things as
"beſt ſuited his Purpoſe in compoſing his
"*Andria*."

My Imitation in this Particular is ſtill farther authorized by the Example of another Poet:

Habet Bonorum exemplum; quo exemplo ſibi
Licere id facere, quod illi fecerunt putat.

Who thought, "when he had the Example
"of good Authors to imitate, he might
"warrantably do what they on the like
"Occaſions did."

But without having recourſe to the Example of *Terence*, who has borrowed whole Plays from *Menander*, with but a few Alterations or Additions of his own, I may juſtify myſelf by the Example of the beſt Writers

of *French* Tragedy, who have imitated, tranſlated, or altered *Sophocles* and *Euripides*.

I was at firſt adviſed, literally to tranſlate *Addiſon*'s *Cato*; but as I was reſolved to ſtick to the Rules of the Drama, I found he fell far ſhort in Regularity to the *French* Tragedy. The *Engliſh* are indeed great Maſters both of Thought and Expreſſion; they know wonderfully well how to ſuſtain a Character, and enter ſurpriſingly into the Heart of Man; but as to the Conduct of the Fable, they are very careleſs, as appears from all their Dramatic Compoſitions; and it would have given me great Pain had the *German* Stage been always liable to the Reproach of being irregular. This prevailed with me to alter my firſt Purpoſe, and write a *Cato* different from that of Mr. *Addiſon*'s.

It would be uſeleſs for me to prove that the Tragedy of Mr. *Deſchamps* is exactly according to the Rules of *Ariſtotle*. This ſufficiently appears from the Criticiſm annexed to it, and confirms me in the Defects of the *Engliſh Cato*. In reality Mr. *Addiſon* joined three Actions in one, tho' each of them was entirely diſtinct from the other, independent of the main Plot, and often ſerving to make the Spectators loſe Sight of it. The Action is as follows: *Cato* with his Party, which is not very numerous, is blocked up in *Utica*. *Cæſar* offers him Terms, which he refuſes upon

upon which *Cæſar* orders his Troops to advance, but *Cato* finding himſelf too weak to make Head againſt him, runs himſelf thro' the Body with his Sword. Mr. *Addiſon*, in order to extend this Action, has inſerted two Epiſodes, or rather two Plots, quite foreign to the main Action. *Portius* and *Marcus*, the two Sons of *Cato*, are in Love with *Lucia*, the Daughter of a *Roman* Senator. *Portius*, whom his Brother makes his Confident, acts like a wiſe Youth, and conceals his own Paſſion: *Marcus* dies, and his Brother wins *Lucia*. On the other hand *Juba* falls in Love with *Marcia*, the Daughter of *Cato*, but meets with a Rival in the Perſon of *Sempronius*, a *Roman* Senator, who, diſguiſed like a *Numidian* that he might carry off *Marcia*, is ſurprized and killed by that Prince who gains his Miſtreſs.

Theſe two Epiſodes are quite foreign to the principal Plot, and, in reality, deſtroy the Principle of the Unity of Action. Beſides the Improbability in the Hurry and Confuſion then at *Utica*, ſo much Time ſhould have been ſpent in Intrigues of Gallantry, the Diſguiſe of *Sempronius* to me ſeems too low and trivial for Tragedy. Even *Cato* in the firſt Act, to me does not ſuſtain a proper Grandeur, nor is ſo great as when he appeaſes the Tumult, and bewails the Death of his Son. All the reſt of the Play is quite foreign

reign to the main Action. In the *Engliſh* Tragedy the Scenes are very ill connected together; the Actors go and come without any apparent Reaſon; ſometimes the Stage is quite empty; and the Entrances and Exits are equally defective, which never happens in the *French* Drama. In ſhort, I did not think it very much in Character, that when *Cato* was dying, he ſhould trouble himſelf ſo much about the two Marriages. The Moderns have made it an indiſpenſable Duty, and as it were a Rule, to finiſh all Dramatic Repreſentations by a Marriage, which has long given me great Diſguſt. The Ancients did it very rarely, and I wanted to try if a Tragedy could ſucceed without a Marriage, an Attempt in which I hope I have not been unſucceſsful.

If I am aſked why I have not entirely tranſlated the *French Cato*, I anſwer, It was becauſe the Plot in the Beginning was laid down with Good-Senſe and Probability; and *Cato* is there repreſented as great, as in the laſt Act his Character to me appears weak and languiſhing; the Death of that great Man being not ſo much in the Character of a Philoſopher as a Bravaoe. A Mutiny is raiſed in *Utica*, where *Cæſar* then was; his Army, who lay without the City being uneaſy about the Safety of their General, furiouſly run into it, and kill all the Inhabitants.

bitants. Upon this *Cato* reſolves to kill himſelf; but alas the Matter is over-done! and I can't allow myſelf to think that any one can approve of ſuch a Deviation from hiſtorical Truth, and altering ſo much the Character of *Cato*, which was that of a Philoſopher.

Beſides, *Cato* is ſaid to have had no Sons; but the Speech which the *Engliſh* Poet puts into his Mouth, when he ſees one of his Sons dead, and inſpires the other with a Hatred at Tyranny, appears to me too ſublime not to merit a Place in my Tragedy. I have therefore preſerved the Character of *Porcius*, tho' I have dreſſed it up in a quite different Light from what it appears in the two foreign Tragedies. I have not brought *Marcus* on the Stage till after his Death, that he may be viewed by *Cato* as the *French* Poet had done before me. This I could not diſpenſe with, ſince I had ſtruck out the *Engliſh* Characters of *Sempronius* and *Syphax*. As for the laſt Act of Mr. *Addiſon*, I have preſerved it almoſt entire, having only changed the Perſons, and cut off the Marriages of *Porcius* and of *Juba*. I have likewiſe put another Speech in *Cato*'s Mouth before his Death, which I took from Mr. *Deſchamps*.

It is likewiſe evident that the Marriage of *Arſene* with *Pharnaces* is only intended, and not actually celebrated: Mr. *Deſchamps* in

his Preface has ſufficiently juſtified himſelf in this Point. To tell the Truth, the Death of *Cato* is an Hiſtorical Fact which does not furniſh ſufficient Matter for a Tragic Action, without the Help of ſome Epiſode, and this one, in my Opinion, is very properly connected with the principal Action; for by Means of it, one has an Opportunity of comparing the Vices of one with the Virtues of another, a Thing as neceſſary for repreſenting Virtue in her moſt amiable Colours, as Shades in Painting are for heightning the Effects of the Lights.

The ſame is the Caſe with regard to *Cæſar*. He did not really enter into *Utica*, as the Poet only ſuppoſes him to have done, and thereby he has an Opportunity of drawing the Parallel betwixt theſe two *Roman* Heroes. By comparing their two Characters, one is enabled to diſtinguiſh falſe from true Grandeur, and to ſee that Vice, when proſperous, may ſometimes aſſume the Appearances of Virtue. The Converſation between *Cato* and *Cæſar* have not a little contributed to the Preference I have given the *French* to the *Engliſh* Poet in this Particular.

Cato was a Hero whoſe Character was ſuited to Tragedy, and comes within the Definition of *Ariſtotle:* His Virtue was great, yet not complete, or unſtained with ſome ſmall Mixture of Vice; for his Love of Liberty

Liberty degenerates into a confirmed Obſtinacy; his Death is bewailed, and his Raſhneſs condemned.

Tho' my *Cato* had a great Run when acted, and read very well, yet I muſt refer myſelf to the learned Readers, to whom, if it is agreeable, I flatter myſelf, that I have not ſpoilt what is good either in the *French* or in the *Engliſh* Performance; for I frankly acknowledge, that all the Beauties of my *Cato* are drawn from *Addiſon* and *Deſchamps*, and all its Blemiſhes are to be aſcribed to myſelf and my little Practice in Dramatic Writings.

Extract of the TRAGEDY, *called* *DYING CATO.*

Dramatis Perſonæ.

CATO.
ARSENE, *or* PORCIA.
PHENICE, *her Attendant.*
PHOCAS, *a Friend of* CATO.
PHARNACES *King of* Pontus.
FELIX, *his Confident.*
CÆSAR.
DOMITIUS, *his Confident.*
ARTABAN.
Attendants of CATO.
Attendants of CÆSAR.

The Scene of Action is a Hall in the Caſtle of Utica.

The Action commences about 12 *o'Clock, and ends about Sun-ſet.*

ACT I. SCENE I.

Arſene and *Phenice.*

Arſene comes to wait on *Cato*, from whom ſhe hopes Comfort and Relief in her Misfortunes, and Shelter from the Calamities which yet threaten her. She talks of the common Report of the Death of her Father *Arſaces*, King of the *Parthians*, and of the Arrival of *Pharnaces*, King of *Pontus*; and ſhe is afraid of being more misfortunate than ever. *Phenice* aſks her if ſhe would ever accept of *Pharnaces* for her Huſband. *Arſene* declares to her, that that would never happen; and opening her Love to her, tells her, that ſhe could now ſpeak as a Queen, her Father being dead. She bids her call to Mind that *Roman* whom *Cæſar* ſent to her Father to gain him over to his Intereſts. *Phenice* runs out in his Praiſes; and *Arſene* confeſſes that ſhe has been in Love with him ſince the firſt Moment ſhe ſaw him. *Phenice* aſks her his Name. *Arſene* replies, She does not know it; and ſeeing *Cato* approach, ſhe praiſ[illegible] him.

SCENE

SCENE II.

To Them, *Cato.*

Cato condoles with *Arſene*, and confirms the News of her Father's Death. He aſks her if, now that the *Parthians* had proclaimed her Queen, ſhe would continue that Alliance and Fidelity which her Father had ſwore to him; this *Arſene* promiſes to do, only aſks the Favour that he would not protect *Pharnaces*. She tells him that in the Civil Wars of her Kingdom *Pharnaces*, in a Battle, aſſaſſinated her only Brother *Pacorus*: That a Peace being concluded, he came to her Father's Court to demand her in Marriage: That they ſent her to *Rome* to ſolemnize the Nuptials: That *Pharnaces* could not leave his Kingdom becauſe of the Civil Wars of the *Romans:* That at *Rome* ſhe had reſided with *Cato*, and that ſhe had followed his Fortune. She adds, that *Pharnaces* himſelf had but a Day before confeſſed his murdering her Brother; and that beſides her Averſion to this Marriage, his Guilt added to the Horror ſhe had at ſuch an Alliance. *Cato* promiſes her all poſſible Safety in *Utica*. *Arſene* goes of; *Cato* remains alone; and as he had ſaid before in the Scene that ſhe had a *Roman Soul*, he is now aſtoniſhed at the

the Sentiments he feels for her, and takes Notice of the great Reſemblance betwixt her and *Porcia*, his deceaſed Daughter. Laſt of all he declares the Arrival of *Phocas*.

SCENE III.

Phocas, *Artaban*, and *Cato*.

Phocas tells *Cato* of a great Reinforcement that was coming up to him. He brings to his Remembrance that when his Wife died, ſhe left him a Daughter, who was brought up by the Wife of *Craſſus*, and who was along with him when the *Romans* were routed by the *Parthians*, on which Occaſion ſhe was ſlain. *Phocas* tells him that his Daughter *Porcia* was ſtill alive, and preſents *Artaban* to him as the Perſon to whom her Safety was owing. *Artaban* gives him an Account of the Victory which the *Parthians* gained over *Craſſus*, and tells him that *Porcia* becoming his Priſoner of War, he made a Preſent of her to *Arſaces*, who having loſt his Daughter *Arſene*, for Reaſons of State, adopted her. He ſhews him a Deed which King *Arſaces* had made before his Death, and entruſted to him, that he might ſhew to *Cato*. *Cato* reads it; and *Arſaces* in it intreats him not to deprive his Daughter *Porcia* of a Throne. *Cato* deplores his Misfortune, and inclines that

that his Daughter ſhould abdicate the Crown. *Phocas* adviſes him to allow her ſtill to poſſeſs her Kingdom, becauſe the Aids ſhe could afford might prove the Means of ſaving *Rome*. *Cato* for good Reaſons rejects this Advice, and taking his Leave of them both, orders them not to ſpeak any thing of the Matter to his Daughter, whom he himſelf wanted to inform of this Affair.

SCENE IV.

Cato and *Pharnaces*.

After ſome Diſcourſe upon the preſent Juncture of Affairs, *Pharnaces* preſſes his Marriage with *Arſene*. *Cato* tells him that he muſt no longer think of that, ſince he ought to look upon her as a *Roman* Lady. *Pharnaces* is ſurprized at his Anſwer, and deſires him to explain himſelf. *Cato* promiſes to him very ſoon to reveal a great Secret publickly before all the City. *Pharnaces* tells him that he ought to think maturely of the Affair; that he had loſt his Dominions, but that his Marriage with *Arſene* would render him Maſter of a powerful Kingdom, and that if he gave over Thoughts of that, he could no longer expect his Service; and laſt of all he entreats him to take Care of his Intereſts, his Liberty, and his Life. *Cato* deſpiſes

deſpiſes him; orders him to withdraw; tells him they could defeat the Enemy without his Aſſiſtance, and in fine lets him know, that *Rome* was yet free, and ſpoke in his Language, and that ſhe would never truckle either to him or to Men of his Character.

SCENE V.

To Them, *Felix.*

Felix informs *Cato* that the Plains are covered with *Cæſar*'s Troops, and that *Utica* had Reaſon to be afraid of Slavery. *Cato* ſays he is going to march forth againſt the Enemy, and again requeſts *Pharnaces* to be gone and join the Troops of *Cæſar*; on which he goes off.

SCENE VI.

Pharnaces and *Felix.*

Pharnaces boaſts that he will be revenged for the Contempt ſhewn him by *Cato*; that in Spite of him, he ſhall have both the Hand and the Kingdom of *Arſene*, and that *Cato* ſhall fall a Victim to him. He diſcovers his Deſign of ſending *Cato*'s Head to *Cæſar* by *Timon* and *Arbates*. That in Recompence he will demand to be reſtored to his Kingdom, and

and *Arſene* in Marriage: Then with Maxims ſuitable to his Deſigns he quits the Stage, and the firſt Act ends.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Domitius and *Phocas.*

Domitius informs *Phocas* that *Cæſar* was very ſoon to be in the Town of *Utica*. *Phocas* aſks if his Arrival did not give them Hopes of Peace. *Domitius* is ſilent upon that Point, and only deſires him to inform *Arſene* that *Pallas* had come into the City along with him, and that he had ſomething of Conſequence to impart to her. *Phocas* goes off the Stage. *Domitius* ſtays alone for a ſhort while, and ſays that *Cæſar*, notwithſtanding his brave and warlike Soul, is nevertheleſs in Love with *Arſene*. He ſees *Cato* approach him, whoſe Preſence ſtrikes him with Veneration.

SCENE II.

Cato and *Domitius.*

Cato reproaches *Domitius* for having ſided with *Cæſar*. *Domitius* defends himſelf by plauſible

plauſible Reaſons, and runs out in *Cæſar*'s Praiſe. At laſt he deſires an Interview between *Cæſar* and him, to deliberate upon the Intereſts of *Rome*. *Cato* conſents to it, and aſks him what Surety *Cæſar* demanded. *Domitius* anſwered him, that *Cæſar* inſiſted on no other Surety than the Virtue of *Cato*, but told him that he ought not to truſt *Pharnaces* in *Utica*. *Cato* informs him, that *Pharnaces* depended on him: He deſcribes the Situation of the Caſtle, into which *Cæſar* might come and talk with him without being ſeen by any Body: He ſays *Pharnaces* is on the Sea-Shore viewing his Fleet; that his Soldiers durſt not come near him; that every thing was carefully looked after, and eſpecially the Motions of *Pharnaces:* That *Cæſar* might therefore have an Interview with him in the Caſtle; and that the Affair might be tranſacted with the greater Secrecy, he propoſes to remove the Guards from its Entrance. He adds, Tell *Cæſar*, nevertheleſs, that *Cato* ſees very far into the Heart of Man, and that Artifice and Diſguiſe cannot blind him.

SCENE III.

Arſene, *Phenice*, and *Domitius*.

Arſene at her Entrance orders *Domitius*, ſince he had heard of *Cæſar*'s Love to her, to

to inform him that ſhe ſhould always look upon him with Contempt and Diſdain, *&c.* She takes her Leave of *Domitius*, and ſeeing *Pharnaces* approach, endeavours to avoid him.

SCENE IV.

Pharnaces, *Arſene*, and *Phenice*.

Pharnaces begs her to ſtay. *Arſene* loads him with Reproaches, putting him in Mind of her Brother's Death. *Pharnaces* inflamed with Wrath and Rage, tells her, that every Body condemned her Conduct; that *Cato* and the *Romans* complained of her, and were even ready to deprive her of her Hereditary Throne and Kingdom. He then propoſes that ſhe ſhould go on board his Fleet, and go off with him. She anſwers, that if *Cato* ſhould condemn her, ſhe would ſubmit; and upbraids her Lover of Cowardice, proteſting that ſhe never will marry him; but that ſhe will think herſelf happy, could ſhe be revenged on him with her own Hand. Upon this *Pharnaces*, in a Paſſion, reproaches her in very harſh Terms

SCENE

SCENE V.

To Them, *Porcius.*

Arſene informs *Porcius* of *Pharnaces*'s Pretenſions, and begs his Support. *Porcius* enraged at the Calumnies with which *Pharnaces* loaded his Father, makes great Proteſtations to *Arſene*, and propoſes to marry her. *Arſene* quits the Stage.

SCENE VI.

Pharnaces and *Porcius.*

Pharnaces with a haughty Air aſks *Porcius* if he thought to gain a Kingdom by loving *Arſene*, and treats him with Contempt. *Porcius* ſpeaking with Diſdain of Royalty, adds, That without any Views to that, he ſhould have thought of marrrying *Arſene*, and that he wiſhed ſhe had been by Birth a *Roman*. *Pharnaces* tells him, that ſhe is ſo in reality, and that *Cato* declared ſhe was no Queen, and inſinuates that *Cato* muſt want Candour, or ſhe can be no Queen. *Porcius* anſwers, *It muſt be ſo*, ſince his Father had ſaid it, and departs in Haſte to ſatisfy himſelf. *Pharnaces* remains alone, and ſays he is confirmed in his Thoughts of *Porcius*'s loving

loving *Arſene*, and that all his Hopes were deſtroyed if ſhe ſhould find that ſhe was not a *Parthian*. He threatens to kill *Porcius*, &c.

SCENE VII.

Felix and *Pharnaces*.

Pharnaces tells *Felix* that the Face of Affairs would ſoon be altered, and that the Troubles of *Africa* would ſoon ceaſe; that the *Romans* having laid down their Arms, deplored the Death of their Friends; and that at laſt the Sweets of univerſal Peace were reliſhed. He aſks him if *Cæſar* approved of his Deſign, and the Propoſal he had made him by *Timon* and *Arbates*, of ſecuring to himſelf the Sovereign Power at the Price of *Cato*'s Head, and if *Timon* and *Arbates* are returned? *Felix* replied, They were not. *Pharnaces* is willing to execute his Deſign with all poſſible Diſpatch, and diſcovers the Stratagem which he intended to uſe for cauſing his Troops to enter *Utica* to kill *Cato*, and carry off *Arſene*. *Felix* tells him that the Guard was removed from the Gate of the Caſtle, and that this Circumſtance would render his Enterprize ſo much the more eaſy. *Pharnaces* enjoins him Secreſy, and departs to execute his Deſign; and thus the Act ends.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Cæſar and *Domitius.*

Cæſar ſays, it is for *Cato*'s Intereſt that he demands this Interview; but that he would wiſh, if poſſible, to ſee *Arſene* before-hand. *Domitius* informs him that he ſhould ſee her, but that it would be to no Purpoſe, ſince ſhe deſpiſed him. After ſome Reaſoning upon his own Love, and upon the War, he ſees the Queen approaching, and takes his Leave of *Domitius.*

SCENE II.

Cæſar and *Arſene.*

Arſene, upon ſeeing *Cæſar*, knows him to be the *Roman* with whom ſhe was in Love. She aſks him if it was he who came to her Father's Court with the Complaints of *Cæſar.* He anſwers, It was; and that he himſelf was *Cæſar.* *Arſene* is troubled. *Cæſar* begins to explain himſelf more freely, and complains that his Paſſion was repaid with Diſdain and Hatred. *Arſene* briefly informs him

him that ſhe did not hate him: By this Confeſſion, *Cæſar* is tranſported with Joy. *Arſene* bluſhes at the Declaration ſhe has made, but at laſt confirms it, and ſays, that without her own Knowledge, ſhe had hated what ſhe moſt loved. At laſt ſhe intercedes with him for the Deliverance of *Utica*, and for the Life of *Cato*, telling him, that nothing in the World was ſo dear to her as the Glory of *Cæſar* and the Life of *Cato*, &c. Then ſhe goes off the Stage.

SCENE III.

Cæſar and *Cato*.

Cæſar adviſes *Cato* to baniſh all Sentiments of Hatred, and promiſes to make him Partner in the Government with himſelf. With Horror *Cato* hears the Propoſal. *Cæſar* on the one hand attempts to juſtify himſelf, and demands that *Cato* and his Friends ſhould allow him to reign. *Cato* on the other hand accuſes him of Tyranny, and rejects all Offers of Peace upon any other Terms than the *Liberty of Rome*. *Cæſar* repreſents to him the Danger to which they were reduced, and that they could hope for no Aſſiſtance from *Pharnaces*, who ſought nothing ſo much as his Deſtruction. That he had ſent two Traitors to make an Offer of his Head

to him, and that he had cauſed them to be detained. *Cato* commends him for his Magnanimity; but obſtinately perſiſting in his ardent Wiſhes for the Liberty of *Rome*, he tells them that he would acquaint the *Romans* with his Offer, and that if they accepted of it, and aſſented to their own Ruin, for his Share he would chuſe to die, and ſo he makes his Exit. *Cæſar* in a ſhort Soliloquy breaks out into an Admiration of his Virtue, and ſays, That if he were not *Cæſar*, he would wiſh to be *Cato*, and to have ſuch Sentiments of Liberty. *Pharnaces* comes up.

SCENE IV.

To Him, *Pharnaces.*

Pharnaces is ſurprized to ſee *Cæſar* in *Utica*, and tells him that he impatiently expects the Return of *Timon* and *Arbates*, whom he had ſent to acquaint him that he would preſent him with the Head of *Cato*: That this was a Propoſal which he ought not to treat with Indifference, as he could thereby finiſh a War which might be fatal to him if *Cato* lived. *Cæſar* rejects this Propoſal with a becoming Horror, calls him Traitor, and hints to him, that the ſame may one Day be his Fate. On this he leaves him. *Pharnaces* com-

complains that *Cæſar* had not ſo much as thanked him for his Offer; but, ſays he, His Haughtineſs may chance to coſt him dear. He then flatters himſelf with the Hopes of carrying off *Arſene*, which finiſhes the third Act.

ACT. VI. SCENE I.

Cato and *Porcius.*

Porcius requeſts of his Father to know the Anſwer which the Senate had made to *Cæſar*'s Offers. *Cato* tells him, That he ſaw with great Pleaſure an Unanimity among them in rejecting a Peace that was inconſiſtent with the Liberty of *Rome*, and that the *Romans* were determined to revenge the Injuries of their Country: He then requires him to ſwear an invincible Hatred againſt *Cæſar*. *Porcius* complying, aſks of his Father whether or not the Queen of the *Parthians* was a *Roman*. *Cato* aſks him how ſuch a Thought came into his Head. *Porcius* anſwers, That *Pharnaces* had acquainted him that *Cato* himſelf was the Author of the Report. *Cato* aſks if he loved him, adviſes him to have no Thought but of War; and tells

him, that tho' ſhe was a *Roman*, his Views on her would be to no Purpoſe, as he ſhould very ſoon know.

SCENE II.

To Them, Arſene *and* Phenice.

Arſene tells *Cato* that ſhe was come with a Propoſal to ſpare the Effuſion of *Roman* Blood: She tells him that ſhe muſt be unhappy while the Diviſions of *Rome* continue: That ſhe loved the *Romans* better than even the *Parthians*; and that tho' ſhe was a Queen, ſhe could not help wiſhing well to the Enemies of Kings. *Cato* declares, that if all the *Romans* had the ſame Regard for him, their Miſery would ſoon end. At laſt *Arſene* tells him that the Suſpenſion of Arms was almoſt expired, and begs him to prolong it, becauſe ſhe flattered herſelf with obtaining every thing of *Cæſar*. *Cato* ſeems to be amazed at this, and aſks how that could be. *Arſene* ſays, that ſhe will touch the Heart of *Cæſar*; that Heaven had beſtowed upon her a Kingdom that could ſatisfy the whole Extent of his Ambition; that *Cæſar* might with her enjoy the Kingdom of *Parthia*. She vows that *Rome* never ſhall be diſturbed; and that all the Fruits of her Love ſhould be Peace. *Cato*, aſtoniſhed to

to hear that ſhe loved *Cæſar*, complains that his Virtue was expoſed to the Indignity not only of ſeeing her attired as a Queen, but of her bearing a Heart ſuſceptible of a Paſſion for a Tyrant. *Arſene* aſks the Reaſon of this Aſtoniſhment; and *Cato*, without any other Anſwer, gives her *Arſaces*'s Letter to read. After ſhe has read it, ſhe is tranſported with an Extaſy of Joy to find herſelf the Daughter of *Cato*, as is *Porcius*, to find her his Siſter. At laſt *Cato* tells her in a reſolute Manner, that Royalty ought to be no Happineſs to her, and that her Love for *Cæſar* was a Diſgrace to her Birth and Character. He then exhorts her to act as a *Roman*, and at once to put an End both to her Ambition and Love. *Porcia*, after many Reflections, at length determines to prove her Birth by her Actions, however dear it may coſt her Paſſion. *Cato* upon this embraces her. He then ſees *Cæſar* approach them, that they may be Witneſſes of the Interview.

SCENE III.

To Them, *Cæſar*.

Cæſar deſires *Cato* to let him know what were the Senate's Demands. *Cato* anſwers, That they demanded the very thing with which *Cæſar* threatned him, his Death, and

that in ſhort they wiſhed that the War would determine their Fate. *Cæſar* aſks what he had done, and enumerates his Actions and good Offices. But *Cato* ſtill treats him as a Tyrant. *Cæſar* puts him in Mind of the Diſproportion of their Strength; and turning to the Princeſs, complains of the Harſhneſs of *Cato*, which he ſaid was no longer tolerable. *Porcia* reproaches *Cæſar* with inſulting an Enemy whom he ought to honour, and at laſt tells him that there was one preſent who claimed his Reſpect. Whom have I to dread? ſays *Cæſar*. Know, replies the other, that *Cato* is my Father. This Point being cleared up, *Cæſar* makes Uſe of that as a Handle to propoſe a Match with *Arſene*, which might give Peace to the World. But this *Cato* rejects with great Firmneſs, telling him that he always had before his Eyes the Death of *Pompey*, who was Son-in-Law to *Cæſar*, a miſtaken Happineſs which haſtened his Ruin; and that in ſhort, he looked upon the Propoſal as ignominious for him.

SCENE IV.

To Them, *Domitius*.

Domitius acquaints them with the Treachery of *Pharnaces*, who with an armed Body

Body had made his Way as far as the Caſtle: That three or four *Romans*, together with the Confident of *Arſene*, had bravely reſiſted him; and that *Cato*'s Son *Marcus*, having darted himſelf with great Courage into the Middle, attacked *Pharnaces*, whom he had killed; but that the latter had Strength enough, while *Marcus* was turning towards the other Enemies, to run him thro' the Back, ſo that the one died as a Hero, the other as a Villain; but that the reſt of the Enemies were diſperſed. *Cæſar* mentions the Treachery of *Pharnaces* with Horror; he takes leave of *Cato* by telling him, that ſince he has rejected Peace, he muſt prepare for War; and ſays to *Porcia*, To-morrow, if the Gods ſhall give me the Victory, I will lay my Sword at your Feet; and then goes off.

SCENE V.

Marcus carried by the Soldiers.

Cato, *Phocas*, *Artaban*, and Attendants.

Cato looks upon the Body with great Reſolution; pronounces an Encomium upon his Son; gives *Porcius* his beſt Advice, and exhorts his Friends to ſet ſail and flee from the Vengeance of *Cæſar*; he gives them his laſt Adieu, and the Act ends.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Cato, *alone ſiting by a Table with a Book before him, a naked Sword lying on the Table, and a Couch on the other Hand.*

Cato pronounces the Diſcourſe upon *the Immorality of the Soul*, as it is to be found in Mr. *Addiſon*'s *Cato*.

SCENE II.

To him, *Porcius*.

Porcius, alarmed at the Sight of the naked Sword, wants to carry it off; but *Cato* prevents him, and then orders him to leave the Room. *Porcius* renews his affectionate Expreſſions; upon which *Cato* embraces him, and deſires that he would go and ſee if his Friends were embarked, telling him that he himſelf in the mean while would endeavour to take ſome Repoſe. This comforts *Porcius*, and he leaves his Father in Bed with the Curtains drawn.

SCENE III.

Porcius and *Porcia*.

Porcius acquaints his Siſter with the pleaſing Hopes he entertained, that all would be well,

well, and that there was a Probability of the Public Tranquillity being reſtored: He informs her of the Orders he had received from his Father, and of his repoſing himſelf, and leaves the Stage.

SCENE IV.

Porcia and *Phenice.*

They talk of their own Situation, and that of *Cato*'s, for whom they tremble.

SCENE V.

To Them, *Phocas.*

Phocas enters with an Encomium upon the refreſhing quiet Slumbers that ariſe from Innocence, and tells them that he had ſeen *Cato* aſleep.

SCENE VI.

To Them, *Artaban.*

Artaban informs them that the Troops of *Cæſar* were making no Diſpoſitions for an Attack; perhaps waiting the Anſwer of *Cato.*

SCENE VII.

To Them, Porcius, *in a great Emotion.*

He informs them that he has been at the Harbour, where his Father's Friends were obliged

obliged to wait for want of a favourable Wind to carry them away. He tells them likewiſe that a Veſſel was arrived from *Pompey*'s Son, to acquaint his Father that he was doing his utmoſt to ſend him Reinforcements from *Spain*, to aſſiſt him to act againſt the common Enemy. — A Noiſe is heard — *Porcius* goes out, and immediately returns in a great Agony, telling them that *Cato* was killed. *Porcia* ſwoons.

SCENE VIII.

To Them, Cato, *carried in wounded.*

Cato, as he is dying, enquires at *Porcius* about his Friends; and if they are gone: He orders him to apply neither for Pardon nor Favour to the Enemy, but to do his beſt to reſtore the Liberties of his Country. He embraces *Porcia*; gives her his beſt Advice; eſpecially that ſhe would eſpouſe the Man who ſhould revenge the Wrongs of *Rome*. He comforts his weeping Friends, and dies.

The Play ends.

A

A ſmall Treatiſe *of* M. DE FENELON, *Archbiſhop of* Cambray, *and Author of* The Adventures of TELEMACHUS.

IMmediately after the Tragedy follows a ſmall Treatiſe of Mr. *de Fenelon*, inſerted in his Reflections upon Grammar, Rhetoric, Poetry, and Hiſtory. The Author tranſlates it, and he quotes it in his Anſwer to the Criticiſm that has been paſt upon him. This Tract gave me great Pleaſure; I had never read it before, nor did I know that Mr. *de Fenelon* had wrote upon that Subject. As the Sentiments of that great Man can't be too public, I thought it not enough to quote them, without tranſlating them as the *German* Author has done, that the Public may be entirely acquainted with his indiſpenſible Precepts.

The Sentiments of Monſieur FENELON *upon a Plan of* TRAGEDY.

TRAGEDY ought to be characteriſtically different from Comedy. The firſt repreſenting great Events to excite violent

lent Paſſions; the other is confined to the Repreſentation of Manners in private Life.

As to Tragedy, I am far from thinking that any Rules are to be given for bringing thoſe Entertainments to Perfection, wherein corrupted Paſſions are repreſented only to excite them. We know that *Plato*, and the Sage Legiſlators in the *Pagan* World, prohibited all Inſtruments of Muſic which might melt a Nation into Effeminacy, from a well-ordered State. What a Severity then ought to be obſerved by Chriſtians with regard to looſe Entertainments! Far from endeavouring to bring them to Perfection, I am pleaſed that all of that kind which we have is but lame and imperfect; our Poets having rendered them as languiſhing, trifling, and ſtale as Romances. All is filled up with Fires, Chains, and Tortures, and a Man there dies in good Health of Body and Mind. The Beauty of the Sun, or the Charms of *Aurora* are aſcribed to very indifferent, very inſipid Perſonages; their Eyes are two Stars; every Term is a Hyperbole, and not a Spark of true Paſſion enters into the whole. So much the better; for by this Means the Weakneſs of the Poiſon prevents the Decreaſe. But I think that Tragedy may receive a wonderful Force, ſhould its Authors, without minding that giddy Romantic Love which makes ſuch Havock in their

their Plays, follow only the true Philoſophic Ideas of Antiquity.

Among the *Greeks*, Tragedy was entirely independent of unſanctified Love. For inſtance the *OEdipus* of *Sophocles* admits of no Paſſion foreign to the Subject. That great Man obſerves the ſame Conduct in his other Tragedies. Mr. *Corneille* in his *OEdipus* has weakened the Action, rendered it double, and diſtracted the Spectator by the Epiſode of a cold Amour betwixt *Theſeus* and *Dirce*. Mr. *Racine* falls into the ſame Abſurdity in his *Phedra:* He has made a double Plot, by joyning with the furious *Phedra* the whining miſtaken Character of *Hippolitus*. Had *Phedra* been abandoned to all the furious Tranſports of her Paſſion, the Action had then been ſimple and ſhort, affecting and rapid. But our two Tragic Poets, with all the real Merit they poſſeſſed, were carried away by the Torrent of Cuſtom, and yielded to the prevailing Taſte for Romances. Wit had become the Faſhion, and Love reigned thro' all. They imagined that it was impoſſible for an Audience to have ſat two Hours without yawning, if ſome amorous Intrigue was not brought on to relieve them: They thought themſelves obliged to hurry over the greateſt and moſt affecting Subject, to make way for a languiſhing Hero who interrupts it. Farther, his Sighs muſt be ornamented with

Quibbles,

Quibbles, and his Deſpair tagg'd with Epigramatic Points. This made the greateſt Authors deviate into the groſſeſt Abſurdities, that they might pleaſe the Public. I ſhall give an Inſtance in the following Lines;

Unrelenting Thirſt of Glory,
Whoſe tranſporting Joys I breathe,
That my Name may live in Story,
Bids me give myſelf to Death;
Yet thy commanding Rage controul,
Before Eternal Life I prove.
To Death e'er I bequeath my Soul,
Let me bequeath a Sigh to Love.

Here was a Man who durſt not die without Points and Witticiſms.

I ſhall give another Inſtance of a Bombaſt Flowry Deſpair.

——— *Pierc'd to the Heart*
With an unlook'd-for, yet a fatal Dart,
The accurs'd Avenger of a righteous *Wrong;*
The unhappy *Victim of a Hate too* ſtrong.

What a bombaſt affected Language is this for ſerious Grief! In my Opinion a certain empty Swelling, which is in the higheſt Degree improbable, ought to be cut off from Tragedy; as for Example, the following Verſes

Verſes have ſomethng in them very forced and unnatural.

O eager Paſſion for a great Revenge,
To which my Father's Death hath given Birth;
Impetuous Progeny of my Reſentment,
How my great Sorrows claſp you to my Boſom!
You fill my Soul with your unbounded Sway:
O give, O give me a ſhort Time for Reſpite,
That I may think on this my preſent State,
On what I wiſh to win, *and what I'd* bett,
Corneille's Cinna, Act I. Scene I.

Mr. *Boileau* found a kind of Genealogy in the foregoing Verſes; firſt, *Eager Paſſions*, which produced an *impetuous Progeny*, and theſe again were claſped to the Boſom by *Sorrows*. The Speeches of great Characters in Tragedy ought to be all noble and lively, if they are in the paſſionate Strain; but then the Language of Paſſion is always natural, and without any ſtudied or affected Turns, for no Man would bewail his Misfortunes in that Manner.

Mr. *Racine* was not exempted from this Fault, which Cuſtom had rendered as it were neceſſary. Nothing is more unnatural than the Narration of the Death of *Hippolitus* at the End of the Tragedy of *Phedra*, which in other Reſpects is very beautiful. *Thera-*

menes, who comes to acquaint *Theſeus* with the Death of his Son, ought to have pronounced the Fact only in two Words, and even theſe he ought to have wanted Strength to pronounce diſtinctly. " *Hippolitus* is dead. " He died by a Monſter ſent from the Bot- " tom of the Deep by the Wrath of Heaven. " I ſaw it." A Perſon thus affected, in ſuch an Agony, and out of Breath, can he ever be ſuppoſed to amuſe himſelf with the florid pompous Deſcription of the Dragon?

Her Eye and drooping Head appear'd
To ſpeak her mournful Purpoſe, &c. ——
The Earth was mov'd, the Air diffus'd Infec-
tion,
The Billow, on whoſe Backs he rode, recoil'd.
Racine's Phedra. Act V. Scene I.

Sophocles is far from this unſeaſonable improbable Elegance. On a like Occaſion he puts in the Mouth of *OEdipus* the following broken agonizing Sentiments:

All, all is now diſclos'd. I ſee thee now,
O Light! But ſoon muſt never ſee thee more.
Unhappy Man! To what a Pitch I'm wretched!
Whence, whence this ſudden Falt'ring of my
Tongue ——
My Fortune, whether art thou fled! Wretch!
Wretch!

Madneſs,

Madneſs, Deſpair, are link'd with the Remembrance
Of what I was, and am. Is there, my Friends,
An Object now that I can ſee or love;
That I can talk to, or can hear with Comfort?
All, all is now Deſpair. Hence with a Tyrant,
An execrable Villain, doom'd to be
Abhor'd by Gods and Men.
——— *Periſh the Wretch,*
That in the frightful Deſart, where expos'd
And bound I lay, preſerv'd this hateful Life.
O barbarous Pity, what a Cup of Sorrow
Had I and mine ne'er taſted, but for thee!
A Father's Murder ne'er had ſtain'd my Hands,
Nor had my Love defil'd a Mother's Bed ——
I'm giddy when I view my Depth of Guilt.
Both, both my Parents ruin'd! — and by me!
Who have a Brood by her who gave me Life.

This is the Language of Nature when ſhe ſinks under Calamity. Nothing can be more diſtant from *quaint Phraſe* and *Witticiſm*. We have five other Inſtances of the lively and ſimple Expreſſion of Grief in the Characters of *Hercules* and *Philoctetes*.

If Mr. *Racine*, who had ſtudied the great Models of Antiquity, had formed a Plan of a *French* Tragedy upon the Subject of *OEdipus*, in the Manner of *Sophocles*, without any ſubornate Intrigue of Love, and in the *Greek*

Simplicity, ſuch an Entertainment muſt have been curious, affecting, rapid, and intereſting. It might not indeed have been applauded, but it muſt have commanded the Affections, and poured forth the Tears. No breathing Time muſt have been left. A Love for Virtue, and a Horror for Crimes, muſt have ruſhed upon the Soul. In ſhort, it muſt have had all the Effects deſigned by the moſt wholeſome Laws. It could have given no Alarms even to the Purity of Religion itſelf. All that was neceſſary, was to cut off the falſe and the improper Ornaments.

The Narrowneſs of our Verſification, and the frequent Returns of Rhime oftentimes oblige our beſt Poets, for the ſake of a Jingle, to load their Lines with Epithets. In order to make one good Verſe, they tag it to another poor one. For Inſtance, I am charmed when I read theſe Words:

——————— *Let him die.*

But it puts me out of all Patience, when that Line introduces another to this Purpoſe,

Or with a brave Deſpair gain Victory.

This unnatural Bombaſt is really diſguſting; it can convey to us no Idea of Men who

who are engaged in ſerious, noble, and paſſionate Converſation. When Probability is taken away, the Spectator loſes all the Pleaſure of the Entertainment. I own that the Ancients a little exalted the Strain of the Buſkin:

An Tragica diſſævit & ampullatur in Arte.
Horat. Epiſt. I. Ep. iii. v. 14.

But he never could mean that the Buſkin ſhould deviate from the Imitation of true Nature. It is her's to give us a beautiful and a great Repreſentation of her: But ſtill a Man ought to ſpeak as a Man. Nothing is more ridiculous than for a Hero, in the greateſt Actions of his Life, not to join an unaffected Simplicity to the Grandeur and Strength of Expreſſion,

Projicit ampullas, & Seſquipedalia Verba.
Horat. Art. Poet. v. 97.

It is ſufficient to make *Agamemnon* haughty, *Achilles* fierce, *Ulyſſes* wiſe, and *Medæa* furious; but a pompous and bombaſt ſpoils the whole; and the greater the Characters, or the ſtronger the Paſſions one would repreſent are, the more he ought to ſtudy a noble irreſiſtible Simplicity.

I can't help thinking that too bombaſt Speeches are often put in the Mouths of *Romans:* It is indeed true that their Thoughts had ſomewhat of a noble Elevation, but they always choſe to expreſs them in a natural

and easy Manner. Tho they were, in *Virgil*'s Phrase, * *Populum late Regem*, a People whose Power and Conquests were very extensive, yet they were as calm and moderate in expressing themselves in Conversation, as they were industrious in subduing those Nations who were jealous of their Power.

Parcere Subjectis, & debellare Superbos.
Virg. Æneid VI. v. 853.

Horace has in other Words drawn the same Picture of them.

Imperet Bellonte prior, jacentem lenis in hostem.
Carm. Sæcul. v. 51, 52.

There seems not to be a sufficient Agreement betwixt the Language of *Augustus* in the Tragedy of *Cinna*, and that modest Simplicity with which *Sueton* adorns all his Actions and Behaviour; for he left in *Rome* so great an Appearance of the ancient Liberty of the Common-Wealth, that he would not be called *Lord*. *Sueton*'s Account of him runs thus: " Not only by his Autho-
" rity, but even by his Countenance, he
" checked this insolent Flattery, and next
" Day

* *Virg. Æneid* 1. v. 25.

" Day made a very ſevere Edict againſt it;
" nor after this would he ſuffer himſelf to
" be ſtiled MY LORD, no not by his Chil-
" dren and Grand-children, either in Jeſt or
" in Earneſt. ——— During his Conſul-
" ſhip he walked generally on Foot; and
" when not Conſul, he often appeared
" in an open Chair, and received even the
" Compliments of the moſt promiſcuous
" Mob. ——— In every Election of
" Magiſtrates he went about with his three
" Candidates, and ſollicited in the accu-
" ſtomed Manner. He likewiſe gave his
" Vote in the Tribe, like one of the People.
" —— He trained up his Daughter and
" Grand-daughter in Spinning and Houſe-
" wifry. ——— He lodged in an ordinary
" Houſe belonging to *Hortenſius*, remarkable
" neither for its Largeneſs nor its Ornaments,
" the Galleries of it being very ſhort: ——
" Famed neither for Statues nor fine Walks;
" and for forty Years he lay in the ſame
" Chamber both Summer and Winter. ——
" His Frugality, with regard to Furniture,
" appears from the Beds and Tables he left
" behind him, moſt of which ſcarce came
" up to the Elegance of a private Gentle-
" man. ——— His Supper conſiſted only
" of three, or at moſt, ſix Diſhes, not of
" the moſt ſumptuous kind, but given with
" the moſt ſocial Benevolence. ——— His

" Dreſs was generally home-ſpun, and made
" by his Wife, his Siſter, his Daughter, and
" Grand-daughters. —— He eat very little,
" and what he did eat, was for the moſt
" Part ordinary Food."

Pomp and Shew did not ſo well agree with what they called *Roman Politeneſs*, as with the Luxury of a *Perſian* Monarch. Notwithſtanding the Severity of *Tiberius*, and the ſervile Turn for Flattery the *Romans* had in his Time and under his Succeſſors, yet *Pliny* informs us that *Trajan* even then behaved like a good Fellow Citizen, and lived in an amiable Familiarity with thoſe about him. The Anſwers of this Emperor are ſhort, ſimple, void of Ambiguity, and free from the ſmalleſt Tincture of the Bombaſt †. All we read of the *Romans* in *Titus Livius*, *Plutarch*, and in *Cicero*, repreſents them as Men of an elevated Turn of Thought, but ſimple, natural, and modeſt in their Expreſſions. They bear no Reſemblance to the ſtiff and over-grown Heroes of our Romances. A great Man ſhould not declaim like a Player; but ſhould nevertheleſs uſe ſtrong and plain Words in his Converſation: He ſhould ſay nothing low; but at the ſame time he ſhould ſay nothing *affected* or *bombaſt*. *Ne*

† The Bas-reliefs on his Pillar repreſented him in the moſt modeſt Poſture, even when at the Head of his Army.

Ne Quicumq; Deus, Quicumq; adhibebitur Heros,
Regali Conſpectus in Auro nuper & oſtro,
Migret in obſcuras humili Sermone Tabernas,
Aut dum vitat humum, Nubes & Inania captet,
Ut feſtis, &c.

Horat. Art. Poet. v. 227 & Sequ.

The Sublime of Tragedy ought not to hinder Heroes themſelves from ſpeaking with a Simplicity adapted to the Nature of the Subjects on which they talk to one another.

Et Tragicus plerumq; dolet Sermone pedeſtri.

CRITICISMS *upon* CATO, *by an* Anonymous Friend.

NOT only I myſelf, but all my Countrymen who have reaped any Advantage from the Progreſs of our Poetry, ought to acknowledge the Obligations we lie under to Mr. *Gottſched*, who has chalked out to us the Road (if I may ſo ſpeak) of *Tragedy*. Should I attempt to give him all the Praiſes his Merit deſerves, my Abilities would be unequal to the Taſk. However, tho' I am ſurprized at his Perfections, (which I am forced

forced to paſs over in Silence) yet I can't help owning that I have found ſome Things in his *Cato* which I look upon as ſmall Blemiſhes.

This Author, who ſo much blames the empty Scenes in the *Engliſh Cato*, has done his beſt to avoid the ſame Fault. The Expedient he uſes for this Purpoſe is, *Naming the Perſon who next appears*, as *Cato comes, He appears.* In the four firſt Acts, conſiſting ſome of two, and ſome of three Scenes, he endeavours to extricate himſelf from *that Difficulty*, by this Stratagem, which I don't like, becauſe, in my Opinion, it does not repair the Loſs ariſing from the Scenes being empty.

As the Rules of the Drama make it neceſſary to let the Spectators into the Character of the chief Heroes of the Tragedy, our Poet makes *Arſene* deſcribe to *Phenice* the true Character of *Cato* very fully. But becauſe this happens juſt as *Cato* enters, and their Diſcourſe laſts a conſiderable Time after he makes his Appearance, it is not probable but *Cato* muſt have heard ſome Part, which might have been avoided by his not entering ſo ſoon.

Two of my Friends are of my Opinion that *Cæſar*, as characterized in this Tragedy, is more reaſonable than *Cato*. *Cato* is blameable for rejecting every Propoſal with ſo much

much Obſtinacy, and preſenting himſelf to the polite *Cæſar* in a harſh, ſurly, nay, next to clowniſh Manner: For Example, in the third Scene of the fourth Act, Cæſar *aſks* Cato *what the* Roman *Senate in* Utica *wiſhed for?* Cato anſwers, *That that ſhould befall thee with which thou threatneſt her*; that is to ſay, Thy *Ruin*, thy *Overthrow*, and in fine, thy *Death*. Some Foreigners have ſaid, *It was not to be wondered at if* Cæſar *loſt all Patience.*

As to *Cæſar* and *Cato*'s being repreſented equally great, what follows in the ſame Scene is a Proof of it, and in my Opinion, from the Sentiments of both, one may ſay of *Cæſar* and of *Cato*, what was ſaid in *France* of the *Alexander* and *Porus* of *Racine*, *Either* Cæſar *is too great for* Cato, *or* Cato *too diminutive for* Cæſar; both the one and the other is a Stranger to true Grandeur; for *Cæſar* is too thirſty of Power, and *Cato* too ſtiff in Principle.

Pharnaces and *Porcius* ſometimes uſe very trifling Expreſſions; I have likewiſe obſerved that *Porcius*, whoſe Character is elſewhere well enough ſuſtained, ſays ſomething out of Character in the laſt Scene. He propoſes that the Corps of his Father ſhould be preſented to *Cæſar* with a View to move his Pity. He muſt have by this time forgot the Advice of his Father, when dying; *But thou*

ſhalt

ſhalt never aſk a Favour at the Hands of thy Enemy, and ſhalt never neglect any thing for the Liberty of Rome. I think he would have, with more Propriety, made *Cato*'s Son ſay every thing that could encourage the reſt of his Friends to take Advantage of the News they heard of *Pompey*, and promiſe, if the Exigency required, to imitate his Father by dying, rather than abandon them.

The Author of the *German Cato* finds Fault with the *Engliſh* Performance, becauſe in it the Actors make their Entrances and Exits without the Spectators knowing why; but in my Opinion he himſelf has fallen into the ſame Fault, at leaſt in one Place: For in the fifth Scene of the Second Act *Porcius* appears upon the Stage with *Arſene*, to whom he thus eagerly ſpeaks, *Princeſs, be not uneaſy about your Safety; ſhould all periſh,* Porcius *ſhall be thy Friend. Tread in your Father's Footſteps, by protecting Innocence. Give but the Word, and my Sword ſhall be unſheath'd in your Defence.* At theſe Words *Arſene* turns her Back upon the Defender of her Liberty, and goes off without ſpeaking one Syllable; I could never be reconciled to this dumb Departure.

In ſhort I think *Cato* in one Place ſpeaks a little out of Character. In the third Scene of the Firſt Act, when he receives the News of his Daughter's being alive, he burſts out into

into theſe Expreſſions; *How? What? My Child alive? What do you ſay?* This ſure is not the ſame *Cato*, who when he ſaw the Corps of his Son, appeared ſo calm, that one would have rather thought him tranſported with Joy, than depreſt with Sorrow.

As for the Verſification I ſhall only obſerve that *you* is often uſed inſtead of the *thou*; but I remember to have read in a Performance of the ſame Mr. *Gottſched*, that even in Proſe Dialogues we ought rather to uſe the *Tu* of the *Latins*, than ſpeak in the Plural Number like the *French* and *Germans*, who, one would think, were addreſſing themſelves to a Dozen of People. Thus I believe he might lawfully (according to his own Obſervation) make Uſe of the *Tu*, ſince the Characters are *Roman*. Theſe few Remarks I have made in running over *Cato*, (which in other Reſpects is an excellent Performance) without any Intention to detract from the real Merit of its Author.

The Author's Anſwer *to the above* CRITICISM.

THIS Tragedy has had the good Fortune to fall into the Hands of able Critics, nay, in ſome meaſure, to meet with Applauſe.

Applauſe. I therefore don't at all repent the Pains it has coſt me, and I am infinitely obliged to any Gentleman who ſhall communicate to me his own, or his Friend's Sentiments.

I never imagined that either an *Epic* or *Dramatic* Poem can be quite faultleſs. Human Imperfection will not admit of Perfection in the ſmalleſt Pieces of Poetry; therefore we can't flatter ourſelves to think it can enter into Works of greater Importance and Extent. *Homer*, who, by the Confeſſion of all the World, has produced two Maſterpieces in his *Iliad* and *Odiſſey*, and who was ſo much admired by *Horace*, is by the ſame *Horace* owned ſometimes to have ſlept, tho' in the following Verſe he defends him.

" *Verum Opere in Longo Fas eſt obrepere*
" *Somnum.*"

" But in a Work of conſiderable Length it
" is pardonable ſometimes to ſleep."

He has even before obſerved, that there are Faults which may be overlooked by a Poet, even when he has ſucceeded in the greateſt Part of his Work.

Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignoviſſe velimus.

Yet

Yet there are ſome Faults of ſuch a Nature, that they may be pardoned by us.

This my learned Critic has undoubtedly had in his View, when he deigned to honour my *Cato* with his Remarks; for I am perſuaded that the great Gentleneſs with which he has treated this Attempt in Tragedy, has prevailed with him to overlook more conſiderable Faults than theſe he has marked. Therefore, if I ſhall anſwer his learned Criticiſms, it can never be thought to be with a View of vindicating myſelf entirely, nor to make the World believe that what he has criticized ought to paſs for Beauties. No, I am not ſo much bewitched by Self-love; I own, and am ſincerely conſcious, that I am liable to Faults. Let me be allowed however to advance ſomewhat in my own Defence, and to intermix it with ſome Reflections which may revive a Taſte for Dramatic Poetry.

The firſt Fault I am charged with, is not without Foundation; for one may eaſily perceive a Fault in another, yet be guilty of the ſame himſelf. *Horace* ſays,

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, ſi caret arte.

I own that I have too often repeated this Connection of the Scene, *I ſee him coming, He appears*, &c. and it is only the Repetition that

that makes the Fault, for the Thing itſelf is none. When two Actors are upon the Stage, and one of them ſees another coming up, for him to ſay *I ſee him, or there is the Man I expected, or I hope he has not overheard us*, is no Fault. This I can prove by the Example of our beſt Dramatic Poets. *Peter Corneille* in his *Cid*, Act III, Scene I, makes *Elvira*, who ſees *Chimene* coming, ſay, *She returns. She comes. I ſee her* ‡.

I believe the Reader will diſpenſe with more Examples either from *Corneille* or other Poets, for they are eaſily to be met with every where: I have brought the Examples from the beſt Piece of *Corneille* on Purpoſe; for it is certain when he wrote that, he was unacquainted with the only true Connection of the Scenes in which he has been ſo often defective

‡ Our Author here brings five Examples from the *Cid*; but we are to remark that the Poet has diſtinguiſhed this Connection of Scenes into two Kinds. The firſt of the Actor who enters, which connects the Converſation with thoſe on the Stage: The ſecond of the Actor who comes in unexpectedly, and makes the other retire. But the Examples which the Poet has cited in his Anſwer, and which I did not think proper to be inſerted here, becauſe all the World knew them, are all Examples of the firſt kind; and it is very eaſy to prove in ſuch a Caſe that there is no Fault in naming the Actors who enter. As to the ſecond Caſe, which is that of the Actor who comes on the Stage, and who occaſions thoſe who are already on it to make their Exit, which is the principal Point, we ſhall ſee how he proves that this Connection of the Scenes does not leave the Stage empty.

defective in many Reſpects. How often does it happen, that two Actors don't ſee one another, and other two appear without knowing why? But *Corneille*, without knowing the Rule for the Connection of Scenes, or without chuſing to follow it, has put into the Mouths of his Characters the Connections we have ſeen, and in the natural Method we have quoted; and pray why may not I do the ſame in *Cato*? *

As to the ſecond Remark of my Article, he ſeems to think, that the Recital made by

* In my Opinion, the Author defends himſelf very weakly upon this Point. All the World knows, he ſpeaks true; but it was of this ſecond Kind of Connection of Scenes, rather than that of the firſt, that he ought to have given us Examples. After all, tho' he really gave us theſe Examples, he was not authorized to follow them at the Expence of good Senſe. It is very probable, that two Actors, in ſeeing a third come up, by whom they would be neither ſeen nor heard, ſhould leave the Stage in naming him aloud; but he is not named only, that the Scenes do not remain empty: and it is not ordered by *Ariſtotle*, that this Connection ſhould be accounted a juſt one. Let us examine the *OEdipus* of *Sophocles*, which the ſame *Ariſtotle* gives us as a Model, thro' the whole of his Art of Poetry, and we ſhall find none of thoſe Connections of Scenes. From the Beginning to the End, all the Actors who appear have a Reaſon for their doing ſo, and the Scene never remains empty. This is the Rule for the Connection of Scenes, and theſe, who for their own Eaſe have found out another, are much to be blamed. Our Poet has for his Vindication produced Examples of this new Rule, which will never gain Credit with Poſterity, unleſs an univerſal Corruption ſhould prevail; for, as I ſaid before, it is repugnant to good Senſe, and our Maſters in this way will not admit of it.

Arſene, to deſcribe the Character of *Cato*, is defective, becauſe that Actreſs, after declaring the Arrival of *Çato*, goes on in her Recital in ſuch a Manner, as that *Cato* muſt have heard her. Theſe are her Words: Phenice, *don't you ſee how the Splendor of his Wiſdom ſhines, even amidſt his Grief! Admire then that Hero to whom no Mortal is comparable. The Gods have in vain ſtruck him with reiterated Blows of adverſe Fortune. He yet remains firm and unſhaken, and boldly encounters their Wrath by his Conſtancy.*

I agree that on a ſhort and narrow Theatre, ſuch as that of *Leipſic*, *Cato* coming ſlowly up, might have heard ſome of theſe Words: But upon a larger Theatre, ſuch as that of the Elector of *Dreſden*, this could not be the Caſe, and the Actreſs might have ended her Speech before he was within hearing. If we ſuppoſe that a Man, ſo ſage and venerable as *Cato*, ought not to enter the Stage running, in the time that eight Verſes were repeating, he may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to make twelve or fifteen Steps before he came ſo near as to hear her.

But tho' one ſhould ſuppoſe that *Cato* hears a Part of *Arſene*'s Diſcourſe, what Harm can ariſe from that? Perhaps ſhe does it on Purpoſe to let him know the high Notion ſhe had of his Virtue; and one can't reaſonably conclude that it is from a Princi-

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ple of Flattery ſhe commends *Cato* when he appears, or from her thinking that he hears her, becauſe ſhe begins his Encomium with the Scene, and before he appears. Therefore neither the Rules of the Stage, nor of Probability, can be violated.

As to the third Remark of my Critic, it indeed affects the very Eſſentials of Dramatic Poetry. It is certain that the principal Character in the Play ought to be moſt ſtrongly marked; and the Poet ought likewiſe to endeavour all he can to intereſt the Audience in its Favour, that it may be the Object of all their Cares and Compaſſion. This is the Rule in which I am ſaid to fail, and if the Charge is true, it is no doubt a monſtrous Blunder.

To vindicate myſelf in this Particular, I might inſtance Mr. *Deſchamp*, who has done the ſame thing in his *Cato*. But that can't avail me; and it may be told me that I ought not blindly to follow the Miſtakes of my Original; I muſt therefore vindicate myſelf by Arguments *à priori*, and prove that in my Tragedy *Cato* is much greater than *Cæſar*; and if this laſt appears as at firſt great as *Cato*, his Greatneſs ſerves only to add to that of the principal Hero.

For this Purpoſe we are previouſly to remark that the Character of a Hero conſiſts in Patriotiſm, in a virtuous Magnanimity;

nor can a Love of Power, nor Tyranny disguised in the Shape of Virtue, pass for *true Greatness*. For instance, *Marcus Aurelius* is forced to make War for the Happiness and Safety of his Country. He is destitute of Money, and rather than oppress the *Romans* with a Tax, he puts up to Sale his most precious and richest Moveables: The Senators and Citizens flaunting and showing away in his Royal Spoils and Imperial Equipage, give him no Concern, provided he can beat the Enemy without impoverishing his Subjects: He pardons the Life of *Cassius*, who had rebelled against him, and intercedes with the Senate for his Wife and Children. *Nero*, on the contrary, affects a boundless Magnificence; he diverts the City with pompous Entertainments, but it is with the Money of the Citizens and People, and the Plunder of the Exiled and Proscribed. He refuses, it is true, to sign one Dead Warrant, but he wishes the *Roman* People had but one Neck, that he might cut it off at a Stroke. There is not a Man who will not prefer the Poverty of *Marcus Aurelius* to the Magnificence of *Nero*; and the Intercession of the one for the Offender, to the Pity of the other for the Criminal.

These very characteristical Differences are found betwixt *Cæsar* and *Cato*. *Cato* is greater thro' Misfortunes. *Cæsar* dazzles by

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a political Clemency; but this Virtue is counterfeit, and at the bottom a Paſſion for Revenge and Power. The Pardon he offers is but a Snare to entangle the Oppoſition to his Views. *Cato*, on the other hand, will have nothing for himſelf, but all for *Rome*; and if he can't obtain her Freedom, he chuſes to die. *Cæſar* offers him Favours, but he rejects them all without the Liberty of his Country. This *Cæſar* refuſes to comply with; and *Cato* deſparing to force him into a Compliance, reſolves to kill himſelf.

Is not unfortunate Virtue infinitely greater than the Happineſs ariſing from the Tinſel Virtue of *Cæſar*? *Cato*, it is true, is obſtinate; but ought not the Hero of a Tragedy to have ſome Faults to excite our Compaſſion? This is taught us by *Ariſtotle*. Was not *OEdipus* in ſome manner the Cauſe of his own Misfortune, when by his unaccountable Raſhneſs he killed his Father, tho' without knowing him? Did not the Rage and Fury of *Oreſtes* occaſion the Murder of his own Mother, a Thing which to him proved the fruitful Source of Woe? Is not *Phedra* to be blamed for her own Death, ſince ſhe declares her Love for *Hippolitus* to her Confident, and even before the Chorus? It is then neceſſary that ſome Part of *Cato*'s Misfortunes ſhould be owing to his own Faults, which in his Circumſtances can

only happen from an Obſtinacy, either the Effect of Stoical Philoſophy, or his own Conſtitution. But ſtill Compaſſion prevails; he is ſo virtuous, ſo diſintereſted, ſo zealous for the Good of his Country, ſo unſhaken under his Misfortunes, ſo magnanimous, ſo upright, that one muſt admire, love, and pity him in Death. If *Cato* had been perfect and faultleſs, the Spectators muſt have been unaffected with his Fate. It is objected to me, that my way of ſpeaking and thinking is low, and ill adapted to the Characters. This Obſervation is really of the higheſt Importance; and I don't know if I ſhall be able to clear myſelf of the Charge. The common Opinion is, that the Stile of Tragedy ought to be very lofty and ſublime; but I don't know if they who think ſo have not adopted this Maxim by reading *Seneca*'s Tragedies, who is always ſo lofty, even upon the moſt common Subjects, that he loſes Sight of Nature and Probability, and has already been ſo much blamed by the moſt learned Poets, that we ought to take for our Models the Tragic Authors of *Greece*, who make Uſe of noble and unaffected Expreſſions, but never of Thoughts that are forced or bombaſt.

The modern *French* Poets have been found fault with upon this Account in a very lively Manner by *Riccoboni*, in his *Diſſertation*

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upon Modern Tragedy, and by an anonymous *Italian* Writer, in a Piece intitled, *Paragone Della Poeſia Tragica*; as alſo by Mr. *Bocelli*, in the Preface of *Merope de Maffei*. That theſe three Foreigners ſhould condemn the *French* Tragedians for this Fault, does not ſeem ſtrange to me; for Mr. *Fenelon* in his Thoughts upon Dramatic Poetry, which I have ſubjoined to my Tragedy, has blamed them for the ſame Fault. *Father Brumoy*, in his *Theatre of the Greeks*, does the ſame in many Paſſages; and *Horace* had done it long before him in theſe Words:

Et Tragicus plerumq; dolet, &c.

Thus the Tragic Poet ought to make *Telephus* ſpeak in a ſimple Stile. When he repreſents him as an exiled and misfortunate Prince, he ought to baniſh from him the Sublimity of Language, and every thing ſwelling either in the Thoughts or in the Expreſſions, if he would move the Spectator to Compaſſion. This *Seneca* did not believe. And this *Lohenſtein* did not advert to †.

Probability is the true Rule for the Tragic

† An excellent *German* Poet, who lived at the Time of the firſt Reformation of that Stage.

Stile, and the Poet is indiſpenſably obliged to ſtick cloſe to Nature, according to *Horace*,

Reſpicere Exemplar vitæ Morumq; jubebo
Doctum Imitatorem, & veras hinc ducere
Voces.

How ſhould I have obſerved this Rule, if I had made young *Porcius* ſpeak like *Cato*, or like the low-ſpirited head-ſtrong and malicious *Pharnaces*, or like *Cæſar*? Muſt not the Difference of their Characters appear in their Converſation? The Perſonages in Tragedy are not all Poets, nor can they talk and think in the artificial Manner of *Seneca* and *Lohenſtein*, who are condemned by all the World. No! they are Men who talk a Language agreeable to their State, their Age, their Sex, their Fortune, and their Character, leſt, as *Horace* has beautifully obſerved,

——————— *Forte Senilis*
Mandentur Juveni Partes, Pueroq; Viriles;
Semper in Adjunctis Ævoq; morabitur aptis.

This I believe may be a ſufficient Anſwer to the firſt Exception of my Critic upon this Head. As to the Expreſſions of *Porcius* and *Pharnaces*, which are thought too low, I anſwer, That in the laſt Scene *Porcius* reſembles himſelf no more, ſince he has forgot his

his former Courage, and propoſes that his Father's Body ſhould be carried to *Cæſar* in theſe Words: " Come, carry the dead Body " into *Cæſar*'s Preſence, we don't know but " his unrelenting Heart may be moved, " when he ſees that *Hero bathed in his own* " *Blood.*" In effect, *Porcius* is no more like himſelf. Neither can we ſuppoſe him to be ſo, conſidering his Youth and Circumſtances; for if I had made him like his Father, how would he have reſembled a young Man? Or how ſhould I have obſerved *Horace*'s Rule with regard to the Character of Youth, the Fierceneſs, the tumultuous Paſſions, and the Inconſtancy of which he has beautifully deſcribed in one Line,

Sublimis, Cupiduſq; & amata relinquere Pernix.

Theſe three Qualities are very plainly diſcovered in *Porcius*. He is fierce and headſtrong, while his Father was alive, to ſupport him, and it is for this Reaſon that he oppoſes *Pharnaces* with ſo much Warmth and Keenneſs: His Paſſion for *Arſene* is impetuous, and in the end he proves inconſtant: For after having anſwered, with a noble Reſolution, that he would never diſregard the Inſtructions his Father gave him, nor fail to follow the Courſe of Life he had preſcribed him, he quits this laudable Deſign, and ſtruck with

with the Death of his Father, endeavours to gain *Cæsar* by the mildeſt Meaſures. This is the true Character of ſuch a young Man as Nature and Experience preſent.

I am likewiſe blamed with committing the ſame Fault with which I have charged Mr. *Addiſon*, by making *Arſene* in the third Scene of the ſecond Act leave *Porcius*, who promiſes to defend her againſt *Pharnaces*, without anſwering one ſingle Word. But is there any thing ſurprizing in this, eſpecially when ſhe ſees *Pharnaces* coming up, her Brother's Murderer, and her own hated Lover; in fine, a Man whom ſhe induſtriouſly ſhuns?

My Critic farther objects to me, that I have altered the Character of *Cato*, eſpecially in the Paſſage where he rejoices at finding his Daughter alive, after he had believed her dead. He ſays that *Cato* ought not to be ſo tranſported as to enquire about her Life four times, as he does. But I aſk, whether *Cato*, in ſpight of all his Philoſophy, is not ſtill a Man? The Stoics never maintained that the Affection of a Father ought to be quite ſtifled. The Emperor *Marcus Aurelius* ſhed Tears for the Death of his Maſters; and when ſome of his Courtiers aſked him if ſuch a Conduct became an Emperor as well as a Philoſopher, he anſwered them, *Allow me for once, I beſeech you, to be a Man as well*

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as an Emperor. Why might not *Cato* have the ſame Privilege granted him? The Stoics prepared themſelves to encounter the moſt terrible Calamities of human Life; and it is partly for this Reaſon, and partly becauſe his Son *Marcus* has fallen ſo gloriouſly, that *Cato* hears the News of it with ſo little Emotion, and even with an Air of Pleaſure; but all the Philoſophy in the World can't have ſuch an Effect upon a Father, as to make him quite unconcerned when he hears that his Daughter, whom he believed dead, is ſtill alive. In this Caſe *Cato* ought to be allowed to give way to the Sentiments of Humanity.

Beſides, if I had made any of the Perſonages in my Tragedy addreſs one another in a clowniſh ruſtic Manner, I believe our *Germans* would have been highly ſhocked at it. In fine, if we heard an Inferior ſay, *As for thee, my Prince*, &c. or a Son to his Father, *I will tell thee, my Father*, we could not have bore it, and this has made me endeavour to light upon an agreeable Medium, by ſerving myſelf alternately, and as the Caſe required, of the *you* and the *thou*. I muſt nevertheleſs confeſs, that it had been better, had I always uſed the latter; if I was after this to write a Tragedy, I ſhould lay it down as a Rule to myſelf, *always to make Uſe of it, and likewiſe to imitate the noble Simplicity of the ancient Manners* to recommend them

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to the Stage; but others will perfect what I have ſo weakly laid the Foundation of.

——————— *Fungar Vice cotis, acutum*
Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exors ipſa ſecandi.

There are alſo added the Author's Anſwers *to ſome* Criticiſms *that were made upon him after his Letter was printed; wherein he very handſomly defends himſelf for not making* CATO *die altogether, according to Hiſtorical Truth. The* Critic *would have wiſhed that he had tore out his very Intrails; and our Poet, upon juſt Grounds, ſhews the Impoſſibility of doing ſo, even in Ricital.*

I FLATTER myſelf I have not judged amiſs, when at the Beginning I ſaid People might reap ſome Advantage from the Reflections of Mr. *Gottſched*, which to me appear very ſolid. And as for the Public, tho' it ſhould only learn, that in *Germany* Authors think as juſtly as in any other Nation, and that the Theatre, and the Laws of it are as well known there as elſewhere, yet I hope it will think this an uſeful Piece of Knowledge.

I

I thought it would be agreeable to the Public to give ſome Account of the Number and Nature of the Pieces wrote by *Hannſ-ſach*, the firſt Dramatic Poet who appeared in *Germany*, as alſo of the Works of *Opitz*, *Gryphius*, and *Lohenſtein*, whom I have already mentioned, and a Catalogue of whoſe Works I ſhall hereafter add for the Reader's Satisfaction.

The

The Deſign proposed by the firſt Writers of Greek TRAGEDY. *The Riſe, Progreſs, and Ruin of* Italian TRAGEDY. *Of the* New Italian TRAGEDY.

WITHOUT repeating what has been often ſaid of the Original of Tragedy, it is ſufficient for my preſent Purpoſe that I explain the Purpoſes for which the ancient *Greeks*, its Inventors, deſigned it.

One thing is plain, that every *Greek* Tragedy had two Purpoſes; one of the Fable, the other of the Poet. The firſt had ſtated Rules, as it ſerved to mend the Heart, and regulate the Paſſions; the other to correct the State, and improve political Virtues. For Inſtance, in the *Palamedes* of *Euripides*, the End which the Poet propoſed was to put the Injuſtice of the Sentence of the *Athenians* againſt *Socrates*, upon the Accuſations of *Annitus* and *Ariſtophanes*, into a ſtrong Light, by repreſenting the Perſecutions of *Palamedes* by *Ulyſſes:* Hence it happened that *Ariſtophanes*, to be revenged upon *Euripides*,

Euripides, who had expoſed him in his Tragedy, wrote his Comedy of the *Frogs*, which is a Satyr on the *Tragic Poet*.

We have no reaſon to doubt that the *Greek* Poets, in their Tragedies, had it in View to excite and keep alive the public Deteſtation of Tyranical Government, then ſo abhorred by the *Athenians*; and on that Account they have repreſented the Vices of Princes as the fruitful Sources of all the Calamities attending their Royal Families. It is true that *Ariſtotle*, who lived ſo near the Times of theſe *Dramatic* Poets, would have overlooked, or been ignorant of the Purpoſes I have mentioned, if they really had any ſuch Meaning.

But this Objection may be anſwered, by obſerving that the Deſign of the Poet, to correct or counſel the Government, was kept as ſecret and dark as poſſible, leſt he might have irritated the Adminiſtration by his Liberties in Writing. Beſides we may eaſily conceive that *Ariſtotle*, who was the Tutor of *Alexander*, the Maſter and Enſlaver of *Greece*, had the Glory and Intereſt of his Maſter too much at Heart, or perhaps was too dextrous a Courtier, to tell the World that the End of all Tragic Poets was to create an Abhorrence of Kings; and that they never met with ſo univerſal Applauſe, as when

when they repreſented Princes in the moſt odious Colours.

After the *Greeks*, the *Romans* compoſed Tragedies, but without any other Aim than to tranſport to *Rome* all the *Greek* Arts and Sciences; the *Italians* and *French* likewiſe have wrote Tragedies, but without having any political Ends in View; they having wrote them purely as public Entertainments, proper to make their Countrymen Sharers of the Diverſions common in other Countries.

Before Tragedy appeared in *Italy*, which was about the Year 1520, the *Italians*, for the fifteenth Century, had been uſed to ſee frequent Repreſentations of the Paſſions of *Chriſt*, the Lives of Martyrs, and of Virgins; but theſe Shews were commonly played only during Lent, and in Churches. And as the Spectators repaired to them from a Principle of Devotion, when the Repreſentation was over they were charmed to feel the Emotions of Grief and Tenderneſs in their Hearts; which they looked upon as a Proof of their Senſibility for the Truths of their Religion.

But, excepting theſe Times of Lamentation and Mourning, the *Italians* had no other View in ſeeing a Play, but to laugh and amuſe themſelves. The firſt Poets who exhibited Tragedies to the People, having ſent the Spectators home melancholy and grieved,

grieved, the Public was ſoon weary of this new kind of Diverſion: The Authors of thoſe Pieces upon cruel Subjects, not reflecting that the political Views of the *Greek* Poets in the Cataſtrophes which they wrought up before the Eyes of a Republic, the jealous Enemy of Tyrants, could have no Place among the *Italians*, a People, whoſe Government was more regular, and their Manners more gentle. However, Tragedy kept its Footing for ſome Time in *Italy*, by the Pleaſure which that Lettered Age took in ſeeing the ancient Repreſentations revived. Men of Learning had before their Eyes only the wonderful Productions of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets: But the Heavy and the Dull, on whom, in *Italy*, the Succeſs of a Play depends, being inſenſible of this Pleaſure, Tragedy was ſoon loſt, and exhibited only at Feaſts, on Occaſion of the Births and Marriages of their great Men. But now the World is quite weary of them, they being thought very improper for public Rejoycings, and Comedies are ſubſtituted in their Place, as I have ſaid elſewhere.

Treſſino, whoſe Ideas were commonly very juſt, was the firſt who preſented a Tragedy in the *Italian* Language: He choſe a well-known Subject, becauſe he wanted that the Spectators ſhould be well acquainted with it. I believe the Reaſon of his taking a Fable

from Hiſtory, rather than one of his own Invention, in which he was very fruitful, was to prevent Criticiſms upon his Undertaking.

I ſhall not here enter into the common Queſtion, whether a Poet, in writing a Tragedy, ought to adopt a hiſtorical or a fabulous Plot. *Caſtell-vetro* has treated that Subject ſo copiouſly, that I ſhall preſume to ſay nothing after ſo great a Man. *Treſſino* exhibited the firſt Tragedy, and choſe *Sophoniſba*. The Action and Cataſtrophe are entirely hiſtorical: For that Princeſs dies by the Poiſon ſent her by *Maſiniſſa*. The Action is intereſting, and very proper to move; but not of ſo horrible a Nature as to oblige the Spectators to leave the Play-houſe with melancholy Looks and diſtorted Features. If the Dramatic Authors, who followed him, had imitated him in this Tragedy, they might have not only got Footing, but might have flouriſhed to a great Degree in *Italy*. But Men of Learning, at that Time, probably judged that this Tragedy was no Pattern to copy after; and in comparing it with *Greek* Originals, they perhaps did not find enough of Blood and Murder in it. They were fond of copying exactly after the *Greek* Poets, and even wanted to improve upon them: And ſince the Time of *Treſſino* we have ſeen *Lorbeche del Giraldi*, *La Semiramide del Manfredi*

Manfredi, *la Canace di Speron Speroni*, and a great many others which have frightned the *Italian* Spectators out of their Wits.

If one were at Pains to compare the Tragedies I have named, together with ſome others, with the *Greek* Tragedies, one might there ſee an exact Imitation of the *Greek* Originals, and conſequently they muſt be owned to be complete Tragedies. It is true that at preſent, becauſe the Stile has nothing of the Bombaſt, and becauſe their Maxims and Sentiments are quite ſimple and natural, the *French*, and even ſome *Italians*, refuſed to look upon them as Tragedies.

The Tragedies which continued in *Italy* for the following Age, remained buried in the general Corruption of Learning. Since that Time it has never recovered; and if very rarely ſome *Italians* write a Tragedy, it is quite neglected. Among all the Tragedies wrote ſince the Year 1620, I believe we cannot find a complete Model, for if any of them have Beauties, theſe Beauties are mingled with very great Imperfections. For Inſtance, the *Ariſtodemo of Dollori* is an excellent Tragedy, and upon the Stage has a wonderful Effect; but it is wrote in ſo Lyric a Stile, that the Language is quite unſupportable: On the other hand, thoſe who ſucceed him to the Year 1700, and which are but few, are acknowledged by the learned

Men of *Italy* themſelves to have ſucceeded no better.

Since that Period, the *Italian* Theatre has taken a new Form. Mr. *Martelli* has wrote a good many Tragedies in Alexandrine Verſes that rhime. Theſe kind of Verſes were at once both admired and cenſured, and are not unknown in *Italy*, becauſe they are two Verſes of ſeven Syllables joined together; and becauſe we have ſome ancient Stanzas of a *Sicilian* Poet's Verſes of the ſame Meaſure, which perhaps may give the Hint to the *French* Alexandrine; for this *Sicilian* is one of the moſt ancient Rhimers. Some time after, Mr. *Gravina* wrote five Tragedies; and the Marquis *de Maffer* brought his *Merope* upon the Stage: But hitherto the *Italians*, ſo far as appears, have never eſtabliſhed any Standard with regard to Tragedy, that may be accommodated to our Age and Manners; the Form of the *French* Tragedy not being at all agreeable to their Taſte, as I ſhall ſhew by and by.

Gravina has been perhaps too zealous an Imitator of the *Greeks*: But the Marquis *de Maffer* has not been ſo ſcrupulous upon this Head; tho' his *Merope*, as to its Fable, is *Greek*, yet it is accommodated to our Manners, ſo as not to offend the Spectators; and tho' in the *Action*, *Cresfonte* is bound, a Javelin brought to diſpatch him, and *Merope* introduced

introduced upon the Stage with a Hatchet in her Hand, all which have been blamed, yet theſe two Incidents have been applauded by every Audience in *Italy*, who have a Taſte for, and admire theſe ancient Manners. It is ſaid that the ſame Author has wrote another Tragedy, which is now locked up in his Cloſet. I don't doubt of its Excellence; and if it has not yet been brought on the Stage, it muſt be owing to the *Italian* Players. For theſe ten Years they have played only wretched Tragi-Comedies; and having thrown up Tragedy, that Author is perhaps unwilling to truſt his Piece with Actors who have fallen into a Deſuetude of acting true Tragedy.

Of the Riſe *and* Reformation *of* FRENCH TRAGEDY.

ITALIAN Tragedy began with the ſixteenth Century, long before Tragedy appeared in *France*. If they who talk of *Italian* Tragedies, would be at Pains to compare them with the *French* of the ſame Age, they will find the former grave, majeſtic, wrote with Dignity, conceived with Good-ſenſe, and exactly according to the ſevereſt

Rules of the Drama. On the other hand, we ſhall find the *French* confuſed and artleſs, languid in its Sentiments, improbable in the Fable, and irregular in its Conduct. In ſhort, if we compare the *French* with the *Italian* Tragedies, with regard to Stile, the *Italians* have this Advantage, that the Stile of their firſt Tragedies has never grown antiquated, while that of the *French* is become quite ſhocking, and entirely baniſhed the Stage. It is far otherwiſe in the Caſe of *Italian* Tragedy which began in the Age of *Petrarch*, who embelliſhed that Tongue with all its finiſhed Graces and Perfections: And I myſelf have, with Applauſe, played in 1712, in the *Sophoniſba* of *Treſſino*, and the *Oreſtes* of *Ruccelai*, who were their two moſt ancient Tragic Poets.

Peter Corneille reformed and brought the *French* Tragedy to its utmoſt Perfection. *Rotron* himſelf, who had trod the compleat Round of Theatrical Extravagance, when he ſaw the firſt Tragedy of *Corneille*, corrected his Faults, and compoſed his *Vinceſlaus*, which may be looked upon as a good Play. We may therefore call Monſieur *Corneille* the Father of the *French* Stage, nay, the very Inventor of *French* Tragedy; becauſe his Tragedies, thoſe of his Brother, thoſe of *Racine*, and of all ſucceeding Poets, reſemble neither the *Greek*, the *Latin*, the *Italian*,

Italian, nor the ancient *French* Tragedy. But theſe great Men lived at a Time when the *French* Court was the Model of Gallantry, and the Pattern of Taſte.

They thought proper to ſoften the Severity of Tragedy, in order to recommend it to the Liking of their young King and Court; and for this Purpoſe they made Love the Maſter and Controuler of their Stage. I don't know if I ſhould be much in the wrong, if I declare that *French* Tragedy is the elder Daughter of Romance, ſince a romantic Strain is ſo predominant thro' it all. This Taſte was then ſo prevailing, that *Thomas Corneille*, in his *Timocrates*, has done nothing but copied *Calander*. In a ſhort time Love became the Tyrant of their Stage, and their Dramatic Authors have forced it into Subjects not only where it was improper, but where I thought it impoſſible it ſhould have Place.

Mr. *Corneille*, by adapting the *OEdipus* of *Sophocles* to the *French* Stage, has altered the Originals, and in Place of *Creon* has introduced *Theſeus*, and given him a Miſtreſs, that he may the more eaſily work up ſome whining Scenes. But before *Corneille*, I believe it never entered into any Man's Head, that it was proper to introduce Love into the *OEdipus* of *Sophocles*. Monſieur *de Voltaire*, in the ſame Tragedy of *Sophocles*, has not

imitated *Corneille*: He has not introduced any ſtrange Characters into the Action, that they may talk of Love: However, not willing to be entirely defective in that Point, without which it is thought a Tragedy would be very unſucceſsful, Mr. *Voltaire* has not indeed added a Woman more than is in the Original *Greek*, but he introduces *Philoctetes*, who he ſuppoſes was in Love with *Jocaſta*, before ſhe was married to *Laius*. And theſe two old Men, for ſurely they muſt have been old, are repreſented, as calling to Mind their paſt Amours.

Can we imagine that, in a Sacred Tragedy, the profane Love of *Polenetes* ſhould affect the Action of the Piece! In the Tragedy of the *Maccabees*, the young *Maccabee* loves a *Pagan* Woman, whom he wants to convert. That I may not run thro' all the Tragedies, I will cloſe, by inſtancing in that of *Sertorius*, in the firſt Recounter of that old General with young *Pompey*, after the moſt ſerious and political Reflections upon the State of the Public. Theſe two great Men finiſh this ſolemn Dialogue with a Diſſertation on their Love-Intrigues. I believe in the firſt Place it will not be unneceſſary to examine the Effects which this kind of Love produces in Tragedy; and this will deſerve an entire Chapter.

Of the Effects which Love *produces in* FRENCH TRAGEDY. *The Cutting of the* Choruſes, *and the Introduction of* Confidents.

ROMANTIC Love generally takes up three Fourths of the Action in *French* Tragedies. If we take away the tender Scenes, and reduce the principal Action to its true Object, the Tragedy would be ended in an Act and a Half, or two Acts at moſt. For Example, let us take out of *Nicomedes* the ten Scenes of *Laodice*; out of the *OEdipus*, the ſix Scenes of *Dirce*; out of *Poleuetes*, the Love-Scenes of *Severus*; from the *Phedra* of *Racine*, the ſix Scenes of *Aricia*; and we ſhall ſee that the Action will not only be uninterrupted, but that it will be more lively and briſk; and thus it plainly appears that theſe tender Scenes ſerve only to damp the Actions of the Piece, and to render the Heroes inſipid and little. If, after theſe two beſt Writers of *French* Tragedy, we examine others, this Truth will be more plain: But when Love is the Subject of the Tragedy, that Paſſion, which in itſelf is ſo intereſting, enters into the Action with

Propriety

Propriety enough. It is generally thought in *France*, that a Tragedy without Love could never pleaſe the *French* Ladies who compoſe the Bulk of the Audience in *Paris*. However, about the Beginning of the Year 1716, when the Players firſt acted *Athalia*, it had a great Succeſs; and in the *OEdipus* of Mr. *Voltaire*, which had univerſal Applauſe, the only thing which was diſliked was the Recital of the Loves of *OEdipus* and *Jocaſta*. Notwithſtanding theſe Examples, they never have recovered themſelves from this Practice. They are willing to preſerve Love in Tragedy; and I believe I can gueſs the Reaſon. The Diſpoſition of a Fable is not eaſy; there muſt concur in it all the Steps of an Action in Life, the Beginning, the Progreſs, the Plot, the Unravelling, and the End. Half a Dozen Love Scenes help theſe inſenſibly forward; thro' theſe we muſt march for the right Conduct of an Action; and by making up theſe Blanks, you are made to jump inſenſibly from the Beginning to the Middle, and from the Middle to the End. By lopping off what I have mentioned, by taking the Love Scenes out of many Tragedies, which may be done without interrupting the Action, we can eaſily point out this Truth, and then will ſee the dangerous Jumps that Authors muſt otherwiſe be obliged to make in the Conduct of their Plays: I had a great Pleaſure

ſure in making this Experiment. I propoſed to my Companions the Plan of a Comedy which might comprehend all the Dramatic Entertainments in *Paris*: The Propoſal was reliſhed, and in a little time three of them undertook to execute it: After the Prologue, we had an Act of Comedy in the *Italian* Manner; the ſecond Act was a Tragedy, and the third a comical Opera. The Sketch of the Tragedy was given by me, and the three Authors executed in ſuch a manner, as to do them Honour, I ſpeak of the *Arcagambis*, which was acted with Applauſe, and of which it is needleſs for me to give any Account as it is in Print. In one Act we ſee a complete Action; the Princeſs *Thamira* takes up but one Scene; and if any Scholar will weave into that Action ten Love Scenes betwixt *Thamira*, the King, the Prince, and the Nurſe; I ſay, if this ſhall be done handſomely, with ſome diſtant Relation to the Subject, one ſhall be ſurprized to ſee a complete Tragedy of five Acts grow up without any other Difficulty.

I own that when the *Arcagambis* was played, I had a complete Pleaſure: I was complemented by every Body upon that Comic-Tragedy; and what was moſt ſurprizing, was to ſee all the Parts and Degrees of a complete Tragedy in five Acts. To tell the Truth, Sir, I was not a little proud

of

of the Merit of having reduced into one Act the entire Notion of a Tragedy, and can perform the ſame Operation upon other Originals which I could mention, purely by cutting off the Love Scenes.

When Tragedy was reformed in *France*, the Chorus and the *Choriphee* was cut off. The *Choriphee* is the Chorus that enters into the Action, and ſpeaks along with the Actors. They have thought that this Part was uſeleſs to Tragedy, and void of Probability: And indeed upon the Plan of *French* Tragedy they may be in the right; for moſt Part of their Tragedies are upon private Subjects tranſacted in the Palaces of Princes, where Choruſes are certainly introduced abſurdly, and againſt Probability. But they found themſelves at a Loſs by thus cutting off the *Chorus* and the *Choriphee*: Therefore, to ſupply the Abſence of the latter, their Authors have had Recourſe to Romance; they have taken from the Character of the 'Squire the Idea of a Confident, either Male or Female, who are linked to, and attending their principal Perſonages.

It is true that in the *Alexander* and the *Athalia* of *Racine* there are none of theſe Confidents. But I don't think that this was the Effect of any Scruples that aroſe in the Mind of that excellent Poet on this Point; but owing to both the prophane and ſacred

Hiſtory

Hiſtory furniſhing a Sufficiency of principal Characters, without the Authors being obliged to have Recourſe to Fiction to help him out with Conduct. His *Andromache* convinces one of this Truth: For if he had entertained the leaſt Scruples on this Head, he never would have given a Confident to *Andromache* and *Hermione*, nor a Tutor to *Pyrrhus*, three Characters quite uſeleſs in the Play: As for *Oreſtes*, the Author was ſo happy, that he found a *Pylades*, furniſhed by Hiſtory, to his Hand.

By taking away the *Chorus* and the *Choriphee* from Tragedy, and introducing Confidents, I am miſtaken if the Authors, by endeavouring to avoid a ſmall Inconveniency, have not fallen into a conſiderable one. For their Heroes, in Imitation of *Cyrus* and *Orondates*, and other romantic Captains, make Confidents not of Noviciates in the Art of Knighthood, as 'Squires were, but often of a Slave to whom they entruſt not only their Loves, but even the moſt delicate Plots. Often this Confident is brought upon the Stage with no other end but to hear and explain that Subject, and is quite uſeleſs thro all the reſt of the Play.

Of the Unity *of* Place *in* FRENCH TRAGEDY.

THE chief Point that is mentioned, with regard to Dramatic Performances, is the Obſervation of the three Unities in Tragedy and Comedy, I mean thoſe of *Action*, *Time*, and *Place*: Theſe direct us to judge of the true Merit of Tragedy and Comedy. *Ariſtotle*, in his Poetry, has not mentioned the Unity of Place; but the Nature of the thing alone has ſuggeſted the Reaſonableneſs of it to Dramatic Poets: When *Ariſtotle* confined the Action of a Tragedy to twelve or twenty four Hours, the Unity of Place was abſolutely neceſſary for ſo ſhort a time, for it can't be ſuppoſed that the Action in that time can meaſure a great deal of Ground.

Beſides, in the Infancy of Tragedy, the Repreſentation was very ſimple: It had no Machines, no ſhifting of Decorations, yet theſe Shiftings are neceſſary for aiding the Imagination of the Spectator when the Place is changed. The firſt Actors therefore were obliged to make Choice of Subjects that were tranſacted upon one Spot of Ground.

Theſe

Theſe Entertainments having pleaſed the People, and the principal Citizens of every Republic being fond of encreaſing their Magnificence, Machines, and Decorations, were introduced; but theſe Decorations ſerved only to adorn the Scene, and not to ſhift it: As to the Machines, they were uſeful for the Gods who were introduced into the Place of the Action which never was changed: Thus we find there are no Shiftings of the Stage in *Sophocles* or *Euripides*.

It will be doubtleſs objected to me, that the Learned in Antiquity aſſure us there were Shiftings of the Stage. To prove this, *Bulanger* and *Lelius Geraldus* quote this Verſe from the third Book of *Virgil*'s *Georgics*,

Vel Scena ut Verſis diſcedat frontibus.

I agree with them, that in the Entertainments of the Ancients there were Changes of Decoration; and I know that *Servius*, in his Note upon this Paſſage of *Virgil*, ſays, *But the Conſtruction of the Scene was ſuch, that it could be either quite changed, or drawn aſide. It was ſaid to be changed, when by the Help of Machines a quite different Face of the Picture was preſented. It was on the other hand only ſaid to be drawn aſide, when by opening the Curtains, a concealed Picture was here and there expoſed to them.*

It

It is nevertheleſs certain that we have no ancient Tragedy, the Subject of which requires a Shifting of the Scene. Theſe Changes of Decoration were therefore only made at the End of the Repreſentation of a Piece, when they wanted to repreſent another: For it was cuſtomary to make a Piece of a comic or a mimic Nature ſucceed a Tragedy; and often in one Day three or four different Shews ſucceeded one another on the ſame Theatre.

Some may perhaps take the Opening of a Door, by which a Meſſenger enters, or that Part of the *Aſinaria* of *Plautus*, where the Father, the Son, and the Miſtreſs, are ſeen at Table together, as a Change of the Theatre. But upon an accurate Examination of the Matter, one will eaſily perceive, that theſe different Changes of the Theatre, ſpoke of by *Servius*, do not take Place in theſe two Inſtances.

In my Catalogue, when ſpeaking of the Olympic Theatre of *Palladio*, in the City of *Vicenza*, I have given *Vitruvius*'s Account of the Conſtruction of Theatres. The Theatres had three principal Doors, and two on that Side where the Actors entered. Every one of theſe Doors fronted different Streets, and different Buildings; and when in the Action a Stranger or a Meſſenger was to enter the City, they opened one of the two laſt

mentioned

mentioned Doors, ſo that without any Change of the Theatre, the Spectators, through that Door, ſaw the City itſelf. In the ſame manner in the *Aſinaria* they opened one of theſe two Side-Doors which preſented to the View of the Spectators the Gallery of the Houſe, where the Actors ſat eating at a Table. But to return; by long Cuſtom the Unity of the Place had become ſo common among the *Greeks*, that there was no Occaſion for preſcribing it formally, ſince it was authorized by Practice, and always preſumed to be underſtood. The Moderns have not followed this Probability; but not to name them all, I ſhall only inſtance in *Calvaret*, who, probably being no Stranger to the Objections made to his Predeceſſor, upon this Account, has endeavoured to avoid this Fault, by putting theſe Words under the Liſt of his *Dramatis-Perſonæ*, in the Tragedy called the *Rape of Proſerpine*. *The Scene is in Heaven, in* Sicily, *and in Hell, where the Imagination of the Reader may repreſent to itſelf a kind of Unity of Place, by conceiving this Scene to be a perpendicular Line drawn from Heaven to Hell.* To remedy ſo monſtrous an Abſurdity, the Critics, who have wrote ſince that Time, have laid down a poſitive Rule for this Unity of Place, which was only formerly conſequentially deduced from the Rules ſo judiciouſly eſtabliſhed by *Ariſtotle*. They have, as formally,

mally, required the Unity of Place as *Ariſtotle* did that of Action and Time, that by this Means the Sallies of the Poets Imagination might have ſome Check. But the late Tragic Poets following this Rule of the Unity of Place more ſervily than their Predeceſſors, have perhaps paid too religious a Regard to it. Is it not ſtrange that the Place where a Tragedy is acted ſhould be the Cloſet of an Emperor or a King; and that the Action of this Tragedy ſhould be the Intrigues and Secrets of a Conſpiracy wrought up and concerted under the Eyes of the very Prince intended to be murdered? Would not one be rather tempted to admit of a Change of Place, as the *Italians* have done ſince the Year 1600, in their Imitations of, and Tranſlations from the *Spaniſh* Theatre.

The late Commentators on *Ariſtotle* are ſeriouſly employed in diſcovering whether this Unity of Place is to be underſtood of the *Extent of Ground taken up by the Actors at the Beginning of the Tragedy*, or of *the Town or City where the Action is laid*. But without ſtopping to diſcuſs their ſeveral Reaſonings in this Place, we ſhall in few Words lay before the Reader our own Sentiments of the Matter.

The firſt of all the Rules, and that which *Ariſtotle* lays down as the Baſis and Foundation of all the reſt, is to *obſerve Probability*.

Thus

Thus neither the Unity of Place, nor any of the reſt of *Ariſtotle*'s Maxims ought to be followed at the Expence of Probability, which is the Source of all the Rules obſerved in Poetry; and I don't think that this Probability is ſufficiently obſerved in the Unity of Place ſo ſcrupulouſly adhered to by the *French* Poets.

The Spectators, in my Opinion, would be leſs ſhocked by ſeeing the Actors paſs from one Apartment to another in the ſame Palace, (as in *Italy* and *Spain* was the Cuſtom in the laſt Age,) than by ſeeing a Conſpiracy concerted and carried on in the Cloſet, and under the Eye of the Tyrant who was to fall the Victim.

Let us, for inſtance, take one of the beſt Tragedies of the excellent Mr. *Corneille*, and examine the Effects of that great Man's ſcrupulous Attachment to the Rule preſcribing the Unity of Place. Let no one charge me with an Intention to criticiſe upon him; I only intend to ſhew, that by ſtraining Things leſs, he ſhould have preſerved Probability more, and that if he has given Occaſion for Criticiſm, it is owing to his being over-cautious in this reſpect.

In his Tragedy of *Cinna*, the Place of Action is the Emperor's Cloſet; and it is in the ſame Cloſet that *Æmilia* bawls out that ſhe will kill the Emperor. In the ſame Clo-

ſet *Cinna* concerts the Conſpiracy with *Æmilia* and *Maximus*. After the Converſation betwixt *Auguſtus*, *Cinna*, and *Maximus*, the Emperor has ſcarce left the Cloſet, till *Cinna* tells *Maximus*, That if he had adviſed *Auguſtus* not to throw up the Empire, it is with a View that his Victim may be the more illuſtrious, and that he may kill *Auguſtus* on the Throne. If the Conſpirators, during all the Action, run a riſque of being heard, they run ſtill a greater upon this than upon any other Occaſion; for the Emperor having juſt left them, could not be far gone, and might liſten to know if they ſpoke the ſame in his Abſence, they had done in his Preſence. It appears then contrary to all Probability to make them ſpeak ſo loud immediately when the Emperor leaves the Room. The Poet himſelf has been ſenſible of this, and for that reaſon, he makes *Cinna* ſay, *Friend, we may be over-heard in this Palace.* But this Reflection comes too late: I don't know but the Spectators might have been better pleaſed with a Change of Place, than with ſo imprudent Conduct in ſuch Perſons as *Cinna* and *Maximus*. Mr. *Corneille*, in the Examination of this Tragedy, endeavours to defend himſelf againſt this Objection, which had probably been made againſt his Tragedy in his own Life-time: His Words run thus: *It is true, it has two Places of Action; the one*

one Half is acted with Æmilia, *and the other in the Cloſet of* Auguſtus. *I ſhould have juſtly deſerved to be ridiculed, had I made this Emperor deliberate with* Maximus *and* Cinna *whether he ſhould abdicate the Empire, preciſely in the Place where* Cinna *informs* Æmilia *of the Conſpiracy which he has formed againſt him.*

According to Mr. *Corneille*'s Confeſſion, the famous Deliberation betwixt *Auguſtus*, *Cinna*, and *Maximus*, happens in the Cloſet of the Emperor; and the Emperor leaves them there, when he ſays, *Adieu, I will carry the News to* Livia.

And it is in the ſame Cloſet that *Maximus* and *Cinna* held the imprudent Conference we have juſt now mentioned. *Corneille* does not allow us to imagine that they had gone out of it into the Apartment of *Æmilia*, or anywhere elſe, ſince he makes *Cinna* ſay, at the End of the Scene, *My Friend, we may poſſibly be over-heard in this Palace; and we ſpeak perhaps with too much Imprudence in a Place ſo improper for communicating our Secrets. Let us remove.* They remained then in the ſame Cloſet; and all we have ſaid of the Want of Probability in their Conference, continues in its full Force; and Mr. *Corneille* could not remedy this without ſhifting the Scene of Action.

But let us return to what Mr. *Corneille* ſays

upon the Place of Action, agreeable to the Principles which he lays down in the Examination we have just now mentioned. All the first Act ought to pass in the Apartment of *Æmilia*; all the second, in the Closet of *Augustus*; and as for the third, it seems to stand in need of a third Place. Is it proper that *Maximus* and *Euphorbus* should talk to one another in the Closet of *Augustus* concerning the Conspiracy against the Emperor? Or that in the Apartment of *Æmilia*, *Maximus* should talk to *Euphorbus* of his Love to her; and that *Euphorbus* should advise him to abandon the Conspiracy, and betray *Cinna*? Mr. *Corneille* must then have another Apartment to preserve Probability. The three first Scenes of the fourth Act, betwixt *Augustus*, *Euphorbus*, and *Livia*, necessarily pass in the Closet of the Emperor: At the End of the third Scene the Stage is empty; and the fourth Scene passes betwixt *Æmilia and her Confident*, without any thing bringing them on the Stage. For this Reason Mr. *Corneille*, in his Examination, says that this Scene, and all the rest of the Act, passes in *Æmilia*'s Apartment. But how is the Spectator acquainted with this Change of Place? Does he not always see the same Decoration? He is then unavoidably shocked with two Blunders, *viz.* The Emptiness of the Scene, and the hearing *Æmilia*, *Fulvia*, and *Maximus*

mus talk to one another of the Conſpiracy in the very Place from which *Auguſtus* and *Euphorbus* had but juſt come. The Change of Decoration would have remedy'd the former of theſe Faults; but the latter is irreparable. What ought we to conclude from all this? Why, that there are ſome Actions which, on account of their continual Change of Place, are not proper for the Theatre; and that if one might, without offending Probability, admit this particular Change of Place, it is ſtill neceſſary to acquaint the Spectators of it by a Change of Decoration; for perhaps it is not ſufficient to make the Actors tell that they have changed the Place, as when *Chiméne*, in the *Cid*, teſtifies to *Roderick* her Surprize at ſeeing him in her Houſe. This Diſcourſe is contradicted before the Spectators, by the Decoration which repreſents to them all along the ſame Royal Palace. *Racine* has made an admirable Uſe of the Change of Decoration in his *Athaliah*, which I look upon as the Maſter-piece of Dramatic Poetry. The Place of Action for this Tragedy is the Porch of the Temple; and when the Poet wants to ſhew the King on his Throne, ſurrounded with his armed *Levites*, he has no more to do but to open the Doors of the Temple: This deſerves the Name of an ingenious Obſervation of the Rules, and a faithful Adherence to Proba-

bility. In this reſpect he has imitated the *Greeks*, who diſpoſed their Theatre in the Manner which beſt ſuited the Natures of their Pieces. Thus *Sophocles*, in his *OEdipus, the Tyrant*, ſtanding in need of the King of *Thebes* Palace, and an Altar, chooſe for the Scene of Action the public Place in which the Altar and the Palace of the King were built. *Guarini*, in his *Paſtor Fido*, has likewiſe ordered his Theatre in ſuch a Manner, that without any Change of Decoration, the Spectators ſee the Temple on the Top of the Mountain, the Grotto at the Foot of it, and the Valley where all the Scenes paſs.

Of the Unity *of* TIME, *and the* Unity *of* ACTION *in* FRENCH TRAGEDIES.

THE *French* are not always exact Obſervers of the Unity of Time, or in other Words, of the Rule enjoining twenty four Hours for the time of the Action: To prove this, I might produce many Examples; but for Brevity-ſake, ſhall only take notice of the *Horatii*. This Tragedy begins the very Moment in which one would think the *Roman* and *Alban* Armies were juſt about to

engage one another; and the firſt Scene repreſents to us the Anxiety of the *Sabines*, about the Event of the Battle. At the End of the firſt Act, *Curiatius* comes to inform *Camilla* that there was to be no Engagement, ſince the contending Parties had agreed to ſingle out, from their reſpective Nations, three Combatants, who were to fight for the common Cauſe. The Difficulty that now remained, was to know who were the moſt proper Perſons to be made Choice of. The *Romans* chooſe the *Horatii*: The *Albans* the *Curiatii*. Preparations are made for the Combat; the People flock to the Camp; a Suſpenſion of Arms is agreed to; the Oracle is conſulted; and by it the Choice of the *Romans* is applauded: The People return to the Camp; the Battle is fought; *Horatius* comes off victorious; he makes his Entrance into *Rome*; the People receive him with Acclamations, and welcome him with Shouts of Joy. He goes into his own Houſe; he kills his Siſter. The King pays a Viſit to *Old Horatius*, whoſe Son *Valerius* accuſes of having murdered his Siſter. *Horatius* pleads the Cauſe of his Son; and the King acquits him. Thus the Tragedy ends. Without conſulting *Titus Livius*, I believe we need only reflect on the Extent of Time which theſe Events may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to take up, in order to be convinced

that

that they could not happen in leſs than two or three Days.

With regard to the Unity of Action, I find a great Difference between the *Greek* and the *French* Tragedies; I always perceive with Eaſe the Action of the *Greek* Tragedies, and never ſo much as loſe View of it; but in the *French*, I own I am often at a Loſs to diſtinguiſh between the Action itſelf, and the Epiſodes with which it is intermixt. What, for inſtance, is the Action of the *Cid* of *Mithridates*, and of ſome others? In the *Cid*, *Roderick* kills the Father of his Miſtreſs, puts the Enemies to Flight, has a Beating-bout with his Rival, obtains the King's Pardon, and the Hand of *Chiméne*. Theſe are all the Events in the Piece; but which of them ought to be regarded as the principal one, or the main Action of the Tragedy? Is it the Pardon which *Roderick* obtains of the King? That Pardon is granted in the Middle of the Piece. Is it the Defeat of the *Moors*? That happens in the Interval betwixt the third and fourth Act. Is it, in fine, the Marriage of *Chiméne*? Not one of the Events of the Piece leads to that End.

Mithridates returns to rally his Forces, and march forth againſt *Rome*? He finds his Son in Love with *Monimia*, whom he himſelf was to marry. The *Romans* advance; *Mithridates* goes out to engage them: He returns

returns wounded; and dying, orders the Marriage of *Monimia* and his Son.

Will any one ſay that the Death of *Mithridates* is the Action of this Tragedy! But the Death of a Hero can never be the Subject of a Tragedy, unleſs the Poet direct every Part of his Piece to that particular End. The Death of *Britannicus*, for inſtance, is juſtly looked upon as the Action of that Tragedy, becauſe the Author's Intention is by different Events to lead us on to this Cataſtrophe, upon which he all along fixes our Views; but in *Mithridates*, what Circumſtance, what Conſpiracy makes us dread, or even expect the Death of that Prince? There is nothing in *Mithridates* which fixes the Death of that Prince as the Subject of the Tragedy.

The Death of a Hero, or a Tyrant, may ſometimes be the Hinge on which the Action turns; or it may be the Effect and Reſult of it.

For inſtance, in the Tragedy of *Heraclius*, *Phocas* is killed, and the Action of the Piece is *the owning the rightful Succeſſor to the Empire, and his Re-eſtabliſhment upon the Throne*: To bring this about, *Phocas* is ſlain; and in this Caſe the Death of the Tyrant is not *the Action itſelf*, but the *Effect* and *Reſult* of it.

In the *Death of Pompey*, *Pompey himſelf* is dead before the Tragedy begins; and his

Death

Death is, as it were, the Spring from which the whole of the Action flows. In this Caſe the Hero's Death is the Cauſe of the Action: The Death of the Count *de Gormas* produces ſeveral Actions in the *Cid*; but in *Mithridates*, the Death of the King is by no means either the Cauſe, or the Effect of the *Action*. As there would be no end of examining them all, I ſhall only ſay, that in the far greater Part of the *French* Tragedies, the Action is very often a Myſtery, into which the Authors themſelves cannot let the Spectators. This is far from being the Caſe with the *Greek* Tragedies; in them you diſcover the *Action* at firſt View.

In *OEdipus*, for inſtance, a Peſtilence lays waſte the City *Thebes*. On that Account the Oracle is conſulted, who declares that the unavenged Murder of *Laius* is the Cauſe of all their Woes. Upon this *OEdipus* binds himſelf by an Oath to avenge it; a Scrutiny is made, and *OEdipus* is found at once to be the Son of *Laius*, and Murderer of his Father. This is the Subject of the *OEdipus*, and one will at firſt perceive the Action of this Tragedy, for every Part of the Actor's Conduct tends to diſcover the Murderer of *Laius*, and prepare the Woes of *OEdipus*.

After having ſpoke of theſe *French* Tragedies, in which it is not eaſy to perceive the true Action, let us now ſpeak of thoſe wherein

wherein the Unity of Action is not ſufficiently obſerved, and where Matters are ſo ordered, as to force one to acknowledge two Actions.

I ſhall begin with *Andromache*, which is inconteſtably one of the fineſt of Mr. *Racine*'s Pieces. The true Subject of this Tragedy is the Marriage of *Pyrrhus*: The *Greeks* charge *Oreſtes* to oppoſe it; but upon his Arrival at the Court of *Pyrrhus*, he finds himſelf ſway'd by a more prevalent Intereſt than that of *Greece*, which was entruſted to him: His Love for *Hermione* makes him wiſh that *Pyrrhus* might marry *Andromache*: The Command of *Hermione* obliges him to kill *Pyrrhus*: The Paſſion which rages in the Breaſt of that Hero, his Fury, his Jealouſy of *Hermione*, and in fine, his Death, are all Circumſtances which intereſt the Spectators more than thoſe relating to *Pyrrhus* and *Andromache*, and might of themſelves make the Subject of a Tragedy. On the other hand, the Fate of *Andromache*, and the Love of *Pyrrhus* for her, are Subjects ſufficiently intereſting to ſupply a Poet with the Matter of a good Tragedy; and, upon Reflection, any one will eaſily ſee, that a Poet of Mr. *Racine*'s Abilities, could have eaſily worked out his Tragedy without *Hermione*'s being at the Court of *Pyrrhus*, and without aſſigning any other Intereſt to hinder

the

the Marriage of *Oreſtes* with *Andromache*, than the Inſtructions given him by the *Greeks*: *Pyrrhus* would have had the ſame Struggle betwixt his Paſſion for *Andromache* and his Dread of drawing out againſt himſelf the united Forces of all *Greece*. *Andromache* in like manner would have appeared to us racked on Account of the Love ſhe bore her Son, and by her Horror at a Marriage with the Murderer of *Priam*'s Family, even the Son of that hated Man who murdered her Dear *Hector*.

If Mr. *Racine* had ſtuck by the Simplicity of this Subject, his Piece had been more regular and more moving; for it is not the Multiplicity of Intereſts that renders a Piece intereſting; on the contrary, it intereſts more when one ſingle Event, without any thing foreign or adventitious, attracts the whole of the Attention: Mr. *Racine* undoubtedly knew this well enough; but he has been forced to accommodate himſelf to the Genius of the Nation, which is chiefly touched with the Fate of Lovers in Dramatic Performances; and as it is abſolutely neceſſary that Love ſhould have a Part in all Subjects that are truly tragical, the Poets, who have brought theſe Subjects upon the *French* Theatre, have not only been obliged to make Uſe of Epiſodes for that Purpoſe, but often to work up theſe Epiſodes with more

more Care and Accuracy than the principal Subject of the Piece. Hence it is that there are ſo many Epiſodes in the *French* Tragedies. To this it is owing that the Perſonages in their Epiſodes intereſt the Spectator as much as the principal Hero of the Piece.

We may form a Judgment of this Affair from the *Severus* of *Poleucles*, the *Eriphile* of *Iphigenia*, the *Aricia* of *Phedrus*, and from the Amours of *Theſeus* and *Dircé* in the *OEdipus*.

If the Neceſſity of always introducing Lovers upon the *French* Theatre, has produced Faults in the Works of the greateſt Maſters, we may eaſily gueſs at the Fate of the inferior Claſs of Authors who have gone into this Practice; but to ſpeak the Truth, this Uſage has perhaps been of ſingular Service to help them to maintain and keep up their Dialogue, ſince there is no Paſſion that furniſhes out a greater Number of *common-place Topics*, than that of Love.

Of Character *in the* FRENCH TRAGEDY.

THE *French* Writers of Tragedy ſeem not to have been careful enough in marking the Differences as to the particular Species

Species of Heroiſm, peculiar to different Nations. The *Greek* Poets and Hiſtorians paint their Heroes grand, but for the moſt Part fierce and cruel. The *Roman* Heroes retain the ſame Grandeur, but it is heightened and ſet off by Humanity and Generoſity.

In the *French* Tragedies, *Cæſar*, *Alexander*, *Pompey*, *Mithridates*, *Auguſtus*, and *Achilles*, ſeem all born under the ſame Climate, and trained up in the ſame Maxims.

Every Hero, beſides the predominating Character of his Nation, ought to have one peculiar to himſelf: We know that *Pyrrhus*, the Son of *Achilles*, was impetuous and cruel; and that *Hippolitus*, the Son of *Theſeus*, was ſavage, auſtere, and ſteel'd againſt the Impreſſions of Love; nevertheleſs, in *Racine*'s *Phedra*, this *Hippolitus* is finical in his Sentiments, and blubbers for his dear *Aricia*; *Pyrrhus* is humbled, tender, and trembling at the Feet of *Andromache*; it may be anſwered, that if *Pyrrhus* is ſuſceptible of Love, and ſubmiſſive to his Miſtreſs, there are certain Starts in which he diſcovers his true Character, and ſpeaks with Haughtineſs to *Andromache* herſelf. By attentively examining theſe Paſſages, we find that it is leſs the Fierceneſs of his Character which makes him talk in this harſh Manner to *Andromache*, than the Impatience which muſt be natural to every Lover in his Situation.

While

While his Miſtreſs was continually bewailing the Loſs of her Huſband, and touched with the afflicting Remembrance of her Son's Situation, the moſt tender Lover would have ſaid as much as *Pyrrhus* on a like Occaſion; and it is not ſo much the Character as the Situation, that Mr. *Racine* has here followed. If this great Poet has ſo much altered two ſo remarkable Characters, what muſt we imagine others to have done?

That we may be able to view this Fault in a true Light, it will not be amiſs to make ſome Obſervations upon Characters in general.

Every Man, and eſpecially every Hero, has ſome predominant Branch of his Character, which gives a particular Stamp, if I may ſo ſay, to his Thoughts, and allows him to reliſh nothing but what is accommodated to it: If at any time he feels the Workings of theſe Paſſions which are common to Humanity, there is no Occaſion for thinking that they are different in him, from what they are in other Men: The ſame Paſſions do not render different Men alike. On the contrary, the different Characters of Men give a different Turn to the ſame Paſſion in every individual Man. All Men may poſſibly be in Love, but every one is ſo in his own Way, and this Way depends upon the prevailing Part of his Character, which is more

or leſs influenced by theſe accidental Paſſions, as he is more or leſs able to reſiſt their Impreſſions.

We find Examples of the juſt Combination of theſe Paſſions in ſome of the Tragedies of *Racine* and *Corneille*.

In the *Iphigenia* in *Aulis*, when *Achilles* is afraid of loſing his Miſtreſs, he does not abandon himſelf to vain Regrets: But that impetuous Hero, impatiently bearing the Superiority of *Agamemnon*, flies into a Paſſion, and threatens him even in the Preſence of *Iphigenia*. *Pruſias* exceſſively fond of his Wife, and giving himſelf up to be entirely managed by her, is deaf to the Calls of Nature in favour of his Son *Nicomedes*. Thus Love, which in *Achilles* meets with a fierce and haughty Character, allows him ſtill to act agreeably to it: But finding in *Pruſias* a Character where Sweetneſs and Condeſcenſion reign, it quite ſubdues him, and imparts all its Weakneſſes to him. The two Poets have been equally happy in working up theſe two different Characters, and have obſerved all the Rules of Probability, which are but indifferently obſerved by the other Writers of *French* Tragedy, who beſtow upon their Heroes that Gallantry and thoſe Sentiments they have borrowed from Romances, without caring whether theſe Heroes would have loved in ſuch a Manner,

or whether their Method of loving be agreeable to the Characters which Hiſtory and Fable give them.

I ſhall not ſpend time in running over all the Pieces of the modern Poets, to point out their Faults of this kind; we may eaſily apply to every one of theſe Pieces, what I have ſaid concerning the prevailing Character of every Hero, and the proportionable Alterations which the Paſſions make in it.

I ſhall cloſe this Chapter by obſerving that the Word *Character* is often improperly uſed. Moſt People find *Characters* where there are really none: Is there, for inſtance, a ſingle Character in the *Cid*, except that of the Count *de Gormas?* In *Roderick* is there any other than that of *Cleopatra?* Is there *any at all* to be found in *Titus* and *Berenice?* In fine, in the *Horatii* I can only find two Characters marked, that of *Horatius*, and that of *Curiatius*; and in *Cinna*, thoſe of *Auguſtus* and *Æmilia*.

I don't pretend to give what I have ſaid of the Character of theſe different *Pieces* as a formal Deciſion: I only let the Reader know what Impreſſion they made upon myſelf; and perhaps what I have advanced may lay a Foundation for their being examined with greater Accuracy for the future. I have not taken upon me to criticiſe theſe Tragedies in which I find ſo ſmall a Number of

Characters, a great Number of which are by no means neceſſary to denominate a Tragedy good. When the Action is ſimple, and turns upon one or two Perſonages, it is ſufficient that their Characters be maintained and marked: Thus in *Roderick*, the Character of *Cleopatra* is ſufficient for the Piece.

Of the Sentiments *of the* FRENCH TRAGEDIES.

ONE of the ſix conſtituent Parts of Tragedy, according to *Ariſtotle*, is what the *Italians* call *Sentenza*: As I don't find a *French* Word which correſponds exactly to it, I ſhall in its ſtead ſometimes uſe the Word *Sentiment*, and ſometimes the Word *Maxim*.

The *French* Tragedies chiefly excel in this Point, which is the Rock on which thoſe Authors ſplit, who, by indulging the Fire of their Imagination too much, ſwerve from that *Probability*, which is the moſt ſolid Foundation of true and genuine *Beauty*.

Is it, for inſtance, probable that a Hero, amidſt the Tranſports of the moſt violent Paſſion, ſhould enter upon the moſt refined and abſtract Speculations in *Metaphyſics*? This

This pretended Beauty produces an Effect quite contrary to the Intention of Tragic Poetry.

At the very Moment the Heart is touched with the deplorable Situation of a Hero, boiling with Fury and madden'd with Deſpair, there flows from his Mouth a Thought ſo delicate and refined, a Sentiment ſo little expected, and ſo much above the common Pitch, that it in ſome meaſure deſtroys the Sentiments of the Heart, by attracting the Attention of the Mind.

Read, for inſtance, in *Corneille*, the Diſcourſe of *OEdipus* to *Dircé*, when he is found to be the Son of that ſame *Jocaſta* whom he had married; and you will obſerve, that in order to expreſs the Situation in which he is, he uſes Thoughts ſo grand and noble, that they force our Applauſe, but at the ſame time weaken our Compaſſion. In the Tragedy entitled *The Death of Pompey*, *Cornelia* alone is capable of moving the Paſſions, and touching the Heart. Yet the noble Sentiments with which ſhe ſo much abounds, both with regard to *Cæſar* and the Aſhes of *Pompey*, are only capable of dazling the Mind, but not of moving the Heart; the Spectators, inſtead of being touched with Pity, are ſtruck with Admiration, which is far from being the End of Tragedy, in which the Skill of the Poet conſiſts in hiding Art,

and ſhewing only Nature. The Sentiment of the Soul, expreſſed in a manner agreeable to one's Situation, is of itſelf ſufficiently able to move the Spectators, which a ſtudied Thought will never do.

If we obſerve in what manner *Sophocles* makes *OEdipus* ſpeak, when he brings him upon the Stage, together with his two young Daughters, we will perceive that the real Situation of that misfortunate Hero, who was at once their Father and their Brother, is not in the leaſt altered, or weakened by the *Wit* of the Poet. If Poets tranſgreſs the Rules of Probability, by putting into the Mouths of their Heroes, whoſe Circumſtances demand the moſt natural Sentiments, too far-fetched Expreſſions, they are equally culpable if the Language they put into their Mouths is not ſuited to their Rank, Age, and Sex.

We muſt agree however, that Elevation of Sentiments admits of many Degrees, but the manner of Expreſſion is different, according to the Difference of Age and Education. Many of the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets have been juſtly blamed for not having obſerved the Rules of Probability in the Language they put into the Mouths of their Characters; and the ſame Cenſure may be paſt, with Juſtice, upon *French* Writers of Tragedy; among them we often find Heroes,

and

and their Confidents, Women and Children, talk in the ſame Strain, and equally ſhow away with Maxims and Sentences. The *French*, who are naturally full of Wit, with Pleaſure purſue that Part of Tragedy which we call *Sentiments*, and frequently ſacrifice to it all other Conſiderations: In this they are encouraged by the Applauſe which a fine Maxim always gains from the Audience; and it has been known that a Tragedy has ſucceeded purely upon the Merit of the pretty Maxims that were ſcattered thro' it. But this Succeſs has impoſed upon Authors, who have not perceived that a Piece, which has no other Merit, has never a durable Reputation: If they want that their Pieces ſhould be long-liv'd, let them apply themſelves to the Conduct of the Fable; let them take care that that in itſelf, when ſtript of the Ornaments of Speech, ſhall be affecting and intereſting for the Spectators; let them employ their Wit in the Obſervation of the Character and other Circumſtances, and they ſhall then be ſure to pleaſe for ever.

Thus it is that *Racine* has acquired immortal Fame. Some have imagined that he has not excelled in Sentiments, or pretty Sayings; but they make this Reflection becauſe they don't obſerve that elevated Thoughts, which ſtrike in other Writers, are formed in *Racine* in as great a Number as in other

Poets; but in theſe they ſtrike more, becauſe the Inequality of their Stile ſhews them in it a Contraſt which is more dazzling. They are not ſo eaſily diſcerned in *Racine*, whoſe Stile is always equally noble, and his Expreſſions always juſt and natural, but never confounded with ſounding Bombaſt; and this is the true Pattern of Stile. Let the *French*, who reproach the *Italians* with their *Concetti*, or Conceits, do Juſtice to themſelves and the *Italians* both: To the *Italians*, by owning that theſe Conceits are not agreeable to their Men of Learning, and diſapproved by them; and to themſelves, in guarding againſt a Fault for which they blame the *Italians*, and which is become but too common among modern Writers: It is true, it is leſs frequent among good Authors, and I will inſtance two in *Racine* himſelf, which are as abſurd as any among the *Italians*.

Pyrrhus, in the *Andromache*, Act I. Scene IV. ſays,

I feel thoſe Ills that I have dealt to Troy
Vanquiſh'd and bound, conſumed with fruitleſs
Plaints,
Burnt with more Fires than thoſe I kindled
there.

I

† See likewiſe an Inſtance of this kind from the ſame Author in Page 258.

I have quoted theſe Paſſages of *Racine*, not ſo much with any Deſign to reflect on that great Man who has ſo rarely been faulty in this reſpect, as to ſhew how much we ought to guard againſt theſe bombaſt Sentiments, ſince they ſo eaſily inſinuate themſelves into the Writings of the greateſt Maſters.

I believe I have ſaid enough on this Subject, becauſe it will be eaſy for the Reader to apply theſe Obſervations to the ſeveral Dramatic Performances he ſhall have Occaſion to examine.

Of the Intention *of the* French *Tragic* POETS, *and ſome* REMARKS *upon* FRENCH TRAGEDY.

THE End of Dramatic Poetry is to pleaſe, and for this the Poets ought to conform themſelves to the Taſte of the Nation. Among the *Greeks*, the People having a great Share in the Government, nothing intereſted them ſo much as the Revolutions of Kingdoms: They were pleaſed to ſee the Paſſions drawn in ſuch a manner as to occaſion them, and to hear the Theatre adopt political Maxims. In the

firſt Chapter we have ſeen that their Poets brought upon the Stage Subjects and Characters agreeable to their Genius. The *French*, contented with their happy Government, through a long Succeſſion of Years under the wiſe Direction of their Princes, are leſs touched with Pictures reſembling the Intrigues of Ambition: They with Joy behold Love and Jealouſy keep Poſſeſſion of their Stage; and Romances, which have had ſuch a Run among them, have naturally led their Poets to repreſent that which they took a Pleaſure in reading: This has given Riſe to *French* Tragedy as we have it at preſent, where Love, in the Taſte of Romance, poſſeſſes always the firſt Part; and this predominant Paſſion may be looked upon as the Characteriſtic of their Tragedy, which diſtinguiſhes it from that of *Greece* and *Italy*.

Perhaps it were to be wiſhed that they could put into the Mouths of ſome other Heroes, beſides thoſe of *Greece* and *Rome*, who were of ſo oppoſite a Character, Sentiments of Tenderneſs and Love: Why may they not make their Princes repreſent Dramatic Heroes, as the *Engliſh* have done? But don't let us inſiſt too much on this Point, for it would carry us too much out of our Way; only we may obſerve that their Poets having given them *French* Sentiments, have thought fit to give them even *French Civility*.

Thus

Thus on the Head of *Achilles*, or *Cæſar*, we ſee a Hat and a large *Nodding Plumage*, like thoſe over a Canopy, and Strangers who are not uſed to ſee theſe Heroes ſo burleſqued, can't help calling them Monſieur *Cæſar*, and Monſieur *Achilles*.

Don't let us blame the *French* Poets, but rather the Taſte of the Spectators, who could be pleaſed with nothing but theſe Pictures of Jealouſy and Love: To this alone are owing the Faults which we have taken Notice of in the Works of their great Maſters; ſuch as their failing, in the Unity of Place, as in *Cinna*; of Action, as in the *Andromache*; of having ſo ſtrongly altered Characters, as in the *Cid*; in ſhort, of introducing upon the Stage, Confidents, thoſe eternally cold and inſipid Characters.

‖ If I ever ſhall have the Happineſs of knowing the *Engliſh* Stage, I ſhall inform you of my Sentiments of it; at preſent I ſhall ſpeak of their Tragedy of *Cato*, which has been tranſlated into our Language, and acted upon our Stage with Applauſe. For my own Part I am of Opinion, that in this Play may be found the true Plan of a well conducted Conſpiracy, and the Language of a Hero who ſtill thinks nobly, but within the Compaſs of Nature. *Cato* is greater than all

‖ This was wrote before the Author had been in *England*.

all Heroes either ancient or modern, yet I ſtill know him to be a Man. It may be objected that it is unnatural to repreſent *Cato* as denying to ſhed a Tear for the Death of his Son; but I affirm that there is no Point in which the Character of *Cato* is better ſuſtained, without his deviating from Nature. *Cato* ſurrounded with the thin Remains of the Senate, muſt have diſcouraged them had he given any Proof of Weakneſs. But even tho' he had been by himſelf, perhaps he might not have ſhed Tears, for theſe don't always accompany Grief, and agree ill with the Character of *Cato*; but if we examine the Sentiments of the *Engliſh Cato* upon this Occaſion, we ſhall find them both great and tender in the higheſt Degree at the ſame time.

I don't ſpeak here of the Underplot containing the Loves of *Cato*'s Son and *Lucia*, and *Juba* with *Marcia*; theſe I diſapprove of, as not immediately affecting the Subject of the Play; but probably the Neceſſity of introducing Women put him under another, that of making them *young*, and therefore he could find no other Buſineſs for them upon the Stage but Love. It is to be hoped that if the *Engliſh* and *Italians* follow the fine Models that are before them, they will give the World good Plays. I likewiſe flatter myſelf that the *French* Audiences will loſe the Taſte

for

for theſe ſwelling Thoughts which ſtun the Mind, and ſhock the Underſtanding. They begin already to ſet up againſt the Impieties and the infernal Politics, and licentious Maxims, which ſome Moderns have derived from polluted Sources, which have only a falſe Appearance of Greatneſs. Then ſhall we have leſs Love upon the Stage, the Manners and Characters better preſerved, the Unities obſerved, and the Sentiments and fine Thoughts uſed on proper Occaſions.

But I do not expect to ſee Rhime baniſhed from the Theatre; a Man muſt be a *Frenchman*, and from his Infancy have his Ears accuſtomed to the Return of Rhime, otherwiſe they muſt be grated by its continual Monotony, not only of Rhime, but of the Period, which always takes up the Space of two. This Form, which never alters, produces on your Mind the ſame Effect that the Billows of the Sea do upon your Eye: Theſe at firſt pleaſe the View, but afterwards fatigue it, and the Spectator turns his weary Eye to the Shore for Relief.

F I N I S.

[N. B. *The following Catalogue ſhould have been plac'd immediately after the Account of the* German *Theatre.*]

Tragedies and *Comedies* of § HANSSACH from 1516, till 1558.

Adam and *Eve.*
Virginia.
Gueſmund.
Abſalom.
Lucians Charon.
The Six Champions.
Jocaſta.
The Two Gentlemen of Burgundy.
The Falſe Empreſs.
The Innocent Empreſs.
The Elizabeth.
The Unequal Children of Eve.
Jacob and Eſau.
Eſther.
Tobias.
The Meſſias.
Griſelda.
The Miſer and the Gentleman.
Palidis.
The Prodigal Child.
Juno and Jupiter.
Job.
Judith.
The Judgment of Solomon.
The Rich Man dying.
The Folly of Eraſmus.
The Judgment of Paris.
Plautus's Menechmes.
Henno.
The Half Friends.
The Queen of France.
The Baniſh'd Empreſs.
Mucius Scevola.
Oliver and Artus
The Chevalier Galmi.
The Bianceffora.
The Violanta.

§ This Poet died in 1567, in the 81ſt Year of his Age; his Works have been printed at *Nuremberg* in 1570.

Dramatical

Dramatical Pieces of MARTIN OPITZ.

Daphne.
The Antigona of Sophocles.
The Trojans of Seneca.
Judith.

Dramatical Pieces of ANDREW GRYPHIUS.

Tragedies.

Leo of Armenia.
Katharine of Georgia.
Cardenio and Celinda.
Charles Stewart.
The Death of Papinian.
The Conſtant Mother.
The Gibeonites.

Comedies.

The Nurſe.
The Wandering Shepherd.
Piaſta.

Farces.

Petex Squens.
Horribilicribrifax.

Dramatical Pieces of LOHENSTEIN.

Cleopatra.
Sophoniſba.
Ibraim Baſſa.
Agrippina.
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